



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of INTO Manchester Ltd

May 2018

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at INTO Manchester Ltd. The review took place from 8 to 10 May 2018 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Alison Jones
- Mr Tom Cantwell
- Dr Christopher Maidment (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
 - the information provided about higher education provision
 - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#)² and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review.

Key findings

Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**.

- The holistic approach to student support that allows academic, cultural and pastoral needs to be readily identified and addressed (Expectation B4).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students:

- the action taken by INTO Manchester to ensure consistency in the design of assessment briefs (Expectation B6).

About the provider

INTO Manchester Limited is an independent educational institution delivering a variety of programmes for international students, either to prepare them for study in higher education in the United Kingdom or to improve their English Language skills. INTO Manchester has a branch campus, which is a separate subsidiary company, known as INTO London World Education Centre (WEC). Both centres are part of the INTO University Partnerships (IUP) network of centres in the United Kingdom and the United States and are wholly owned by IUP.

INTO Manchester and London provide higher education programmes in partnership with two awarding partners, the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) and the Northern Consortium UK (NCUK). Programmes at the Manchester Centre are franchised from NCUK while those at the London Centre are validated by UoG. Programmes are designed with progression to specific further study and progression is guaranteed for students upon successful completion of their studies at INTO. INTO Manchester holds the Tier 4 sponsor licence with INTO London on the same licence.

INTO Manchester delivers level 4 International Year One and level 6 pre-master's programmes. At the time of the review there were 114 students on these programmes which both are either 9 month or 6 months in duration. Higher education programmes at INTO London include the level 4 International Year One in Business and four level 6 pre-master's programmes. The pre-master's programmes are of differential length (3 or 2 terms), with differentiated entry requirements and are delivered in the subject areas of Business Administration, and Banking and Finance.

The last Review for Educational Oversight took place in 2014 and identified a number of areas of good practice including the quality of pre-arrival information, student support, accessibility to information provided for students; the approach to the use of social media and emerging technologies, and the centres' approach to the approval of information. The centres built on this good practice and have made further refinements. The review also identified three advisable recommendations regarding the alignment of policy and procedures to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the engagement of students as partners in the quality assurance of their education, and the specification of the level and credit value of modules on the record of achievement. All recommendations have been addressed and implemented.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)* are met by:

- positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications
- ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications
- naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications
- awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.1 INTO does not have degree awarding powers so ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the alignment of awards with the requirements and specifications of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)* rests with the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) for the London provision and the Northern Consortium UK (NCUK) for programmes delivered in Manchester. London programmes are designed, developed and updated by INTO London in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire and are subject to the awarding body's validation and approval systems while Manchester programmes are developed by NCUK with minimal input from INTO.

1.2 Clear agreements, policies and procedures for the maintenance of standards are followed by the INTO centres. Mutual responsibilities are defined in the agreements and in responsibilities checklists. The systems and procedures implemented by the centres to align with the requirements of its awarding partners to ensure the maintenance of academic standards would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3 The review team examined evidence that included documents relating to partnership agreements, defined areas of responsibility, management and meeting structures, policy and procedure documents and records of programme validations. The team also met with senior and academic staff.

1.4 The University of Gloucestershire's programme approval process requires scrutiny and testing of programme specifications and module descriptors alongside a review of staffing and resources. Programme approval reports confirm that programmes are positioned at the correct level and are delivered to the appropriate standard. Programme specifications and module descriptors are aligned with the standards of the FHEQ and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.5 New programmes and updates to existing programmes are overseen by the Joint Quality Committee (JQC) to ensure alignment with Part A of the Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and the requirements of the awarding body's approval processes. NCUK programmes are delivered in accordance with the awarding organisation's quality framework.

1.6 The maintenance of academic standards is supported by external examiners, appointed by the awarding partners. External examiner reports confirm that the INTO centres discharge their responsibilities for the maintenance of academic standards appropriately.

1.7 The review team concludes that the systems and processes are effective in securing and maintaining academic standards. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.8 The academic framework and regulations that govern the programmes delivered at the INTO centres are those of the awarding partners. The centres' internal quality assurance framework and a clearly defined deliberative structure support the implementation of the academic framework and regulations of its awarding partners. Oversight of the management and delivery of academic standards at INTO Manchester is the responsibility of the Academic Director. At London it is the responsibility of the Centre Director. The Management Committee for each centre is responsible for the commercial viability and day-to-day running of each centre while the Joint Quality Committee (JQC) takes responsibility for oversight of all academic matters. Each centre also has an Academic Board which is responsible for oversight of the programme committees, the Development Plan for INTO London and monitoring of student feedback. The Academic Boards also have the responsibility to approve all annual reports before submitting them to the JQC. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.9 The review team examined academic policies, internal quality assurance arrangements and relevant committee minutes. The team also met senior and academic staff.

1.10 The centres' academic policies and a quality assurance framework clearly reflect the awarding partners' regulations and requirements while contextualising them to the needs of each centre and its students. The centres effectively ensure that the management and oversight of academic standards is supported through a robust committee structure, published policy and guidance documentation and staff training. Partnership and sharing is built in to these structures. Information and opinion is fed into the JQC from a range of other committees and groups including the Academic Board, the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and individual Programme Committees. Output from these systems in the form of minutes and published policies demonstrate an effective approach to securing academic standards.

1.11 The review team concludes that the INTO centres effectively implement the awarding partners' academic framework and regulations to secure academic standards. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.12 The development of definitive programme records is a shared responsibility of the awarding partners and the INTO centres. All programmes have programme specifications which are developed by the centres. Programme specifications for INTO Manchester are modelled on the relevant NCUK programme frameworks. Using the University of Gloucestershire's programme specification template, INTO London's programme specifications were approved as part of the programme re-approval process.

1.13 Programme handbooks are issued to students that include information about programme structures. Additionally, key programme information such as programme specifications is provided through the virtual learning environment (VLE). Programme Managers at both centres are responsible for ensuring that programme specifications are kept up to date in accordance with specifications provided by the University of Gloucestershire and NCUK. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.14 The review team considered a range of programme specifications and programme information for students and staff. The team also met with senior and academic staff, and students.

1.15 Programme specifications are comprehensive and provide information on the awarding and teaching institutions, the level and mode of study, programme aims, learning outcomes, programme structure, entry requirements, and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. INTO London programme specifications also reference the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and provide a matrix illustrating the relationship between module assessments and learning outcomes. Teaching staff use them as a reference point for delivery and assessment.

1.16 The programme information provided to students through handbooks and the VLE is appropriately detailed. Students explained that they knew where to find information about their programme. Staff were able to articulate the described process for ensuring that programme records are kept up to date.

1.17 The review team concludes that there are robust processes in place for the development and maintenance of definitive programme records. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.18 Responsibility for setting academic standards and learning outcomes for qualifications rest with the respective awarding partners. Through their programme approval processes they ensure that academic standards are set in accordance with their respective academic frameworks and regulations and at a level that meets UK threshold standards for the qualification. INTO London adheres to the University of Gloucestershire's programme approval process when putting programmes up for approval. INTO Manchester has no direct input into the programme approval process for its NCUK programmes. All programmes are aligned to the FHEQ and are referenced to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements where appropriate. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.19 The review team examined a range of evidence, including institutional agreements, responsibility checklists, quality assurance manuals, and programme approval and re-approval reports. The team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional services staff, senior staff and representatives from the awarding bodies.

1.20 Responsibilities for programme approval are clearly documented, confirming that formal academic approval of all programmes rest with the respective awarding partners. During meetings, staff were able to describe clearly the requirements of the respective awarding partners in terms of programme approval. Approval reports and minutes of committee meetings for INTO London detail staff engagement and consideration of programme approval requirements. Opportunities for staff at INTO Manchester to engage with NCUK programme approval involved providing feedback on syllabus content and assessment through programme committees and NCUK general audits of its provision. In addition, NCUK run a consultation as part of the programme review process and INTO has the opportunity to participate in this.

1.21 The review team concludes that the processes established and implemented for the approval of programmes offered by each of the INTO centres are designed to ensure that the programmes meet the requirements set by the awarding partners and are aligned with UK sector threshold standards. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.22 Responsibility for specifying learning outcomes, and for confirmation of the achievement of learning outcomes and their alignment with national standards, rest with the respective awarding partners. Both INTO centres produce their own guidance on the assessment processes that articulate the setting of assessment, marking and moderation, and external examining. Generic and specific marking criteria are articulated with the assessment briefs. Academic standards are secured through the marking and moderation processes with outcomes being presented at Assessment and Examination Boards to verify academic standards.

1.23 For the provision at Manchester, NCUK is responsible for setting assessments with the requirement for the centre to provide assessment reports as outlined in the NCUK Quality Assurance Framework. The NCUK designed assessment briefs only require students to demonstrate that they meet relevant, not all, learning outcomes specified within module specifications. In line with NCUK requirements, external examiners are required to comment on the processes for marking and standardisation and reports produced by the centre's internal markers. At INTO London, an Assessment Scrutiny Panel ensures assessments produced are reviewed prior to submission to UoG for approval at least one term in advance of publication to students. External examiners are asked to comment on the design and structure of assessments in line with the University's requirements. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.24 The review team scrutinised assessment policies and procedures of both INTO centres, in addition to a wide range of related documentation including assignment briefs, marking schemes, mark sheets, grading criteria, marked work, student handbooks, committee minutes and exam board minutes. The team also discussed assessment-related issues with students, senior, teaching and professional support staff and representatives from the two awarding partners.

1.25 Staff at both centres recognise their responsibilities for the assessment process which allow students to demonstrate that they have met the relevant learning outcomes. All staff and students whom the team met demonstrated clear awareness of the assessment arrangements in place at their respective centre. Students confirmed that they understood the credit and percentage values of their particular assessments and that they were aware of the grading criteria and the learning outcomes they were required to meet in order to achieve a good result.

With respect to INTO London, external examiner reports confirm that assessments are appropriately set by the centre and enable achievement of learning outcomes to be demonstrated. External examiner reports for INTO Manchester confirm the appropriateness of the marking and standardisation processes. Minutes from Examination Boards and external examiner reports indicate that assessment policies and academic regulations are

properly applied by both centres.

1.26 The review team concludes that there are robust procedures in place to ensure that assessments are fit for purpose, and that assessment decisions are fair and accurately recorded. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.27 The awarding partners are responsible for ensuring that the processes for the monitoring and review of programmes address the achievement of UK threshold academic standards. The centres follow the processes and templates of the awarding partners and produces annual programme monitoring reports. In addition, the University of Gloucestershire undertakes an annual partnership review with INTO London at which the outcomes from the annual quality review reports are discussed, including application, enrolment and progression data, with actions identified for continued monitoring or updating. The review event also monitors actions arising from periodic partnership reviews.

1.28 NCUK conducts periodic audits for the programmes delivered at INTO Manchester that take account of feedback from staff and students, monitor actions arising from annual reports. The audit report which is approved by the NCUK Delivery Quality Committee is the source of feedback to INTO Manchester. In addition, INTO Manchester produces an annual self-evaluation) report which is used to inform the NCUK Delivery Quality Committee (DQC) which then provides feedback to INTO Manchester. INTO London's programme are subject to periodic review in accordance with the University's requirements. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.29 The team examined documents relating to monitoring and review including programme monitoring reports. The team also met with senior, teaching and professional services staff and representatives from the two awarding partners.

1.30 The centres' arrangements for annual programme monitoring, in collaboration with their awarding partners, allows ongoing review of the academic currency of programmes and, informed by qualitative and quantitative data, allows effective review of student achievement against both UK threshold standards and the University's academic standards.

1.31 For INTO London the most recent periodic review and revalidation confirms that the provision complies with the University regulations and commended the quality of its learning environment. NCUK audit reports conclude that INTO Manchester meets or exceeds NCUK's requirements for the delivery of the programmes.

1.32 The review team concludes that the processes established and implemented for the monitoring and review of programmes offered by each of the INTO centres are designed to ensure that programmes maintain the standards required by the awarding partners and address the achievement of UK threshold standards. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.33 The INTO centres' role and responsibilities for the use of external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards are limited. The main source of external and independent expertise are the external examiners appointed by its awarding partners. The centres expect their reports to be used as a source of evidence for other quality assurance activities.

1.34 External advisers are used during the programme approval and periodic review processes in accordance with the awarding body's procedures. Programme teams also make use of guest speakers and other external input. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.35 The review team examined programme approval and review documentation, and relevant committee minutes. The team also met with senior and academic staff and students.

1.36 Programme approval and review reports for the London provision demonstrate that independent external expertise is used appropriately when setting academic standards for the validated programmes. To support the alignment of programmes with relevant sectors and facilitate subject development programme teams make use of external expertise in the delivery of programmes.

1.37 External examiner reports are used appropriately at programme and institutional level to ensure programmes are delivered in accordance with the requirements of the awarding partners and academic standards are being maintained. Recommendations and comments from their reports feed into annual programme monitoring.

1.38 The review team concludes that INTO makes adequate use of independent and external expertise in line with its responsibilities. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.39 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. All seven of the Expectations for this judgement area are met and the associated level of risk is low in each case. There are no recommendations or affirmations in this judgement area.

1.40 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding body and awarding organisation at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*

Findings

2.1 Responsibility for the approval of programmes offered at both centres rests with the awarding partners. INTO London takes a lead role in the design and development of its University of Gloucestershire validated programmes. There is an internal process for the initial scrutiny and approval and the Centre follows a recently revised process to ensure that the development is managed in a strategic fashion.

2.2 For INTO Manchester, the responsibility for programme design lies with NCUK. The Centre has some input into programme development through its assessment and quality assurance processes, which feed into NCUK's development cycle. NCUK also retains responsibility for changes to programmes and modules, although staff and students are consulted upon programme changes and developments.

2.3 For both centres the coordination of the management of centre processes with the management of the process by INTO University Partnerships is overseen by the respective Academic Board and monitored by the Joint Quality Committee and INTO University Partnerships. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.4 The review team examined programme approval documentation including approval reports, quality assurance manuals, and minutes and terms of reference of key committees. The team also held meetings with senior and teaching staff.

2.5 The two centres appropriately discharge their responsibilities for programme design and development by adhering to the processes of the awarding partners. Staff explained that new programme development ideas arise from a variety of sources including student and staff feedback and market intelligence, in consultation with the awarding partners. Programme approval and review documentation and reports for INTO London confirm that centre staff designed and developed programmes that set academic standards at the correct level and provide sufficient learning opportunities. For INTO Manchester, the review team was advised that new NCUK modules have been developed in liaison with staff.

2.6 The review team concludes that there are systematic processes in place to ensure the effective design, development and approval of programmes. The responsibilities around these are clearly understood and effectively implemented. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education

Findings

2.7 The responsibility of the INTO centres for the recruitment, selection and admissions of students is limited. The majority of students are recruited through a worldwide network of agents who are selected and managed by staff of INTO's Global Recruitment Unit in regional offices. Agents receive a standard contract that specifies their duties and responsibilities. A Partner Portal contains detailed programme information allowing agents to find suitable study options for prospective students and to submit and track applications they make for students. The admissions process to the centres is centrally managed by INTO's UK Central Admissions (UKCA) which provides an application processing and assessment service, using entry requirements set by the centres' degree awarding partners.

2.8 In addition, both centres operate an admissions process for students who apply in person at a centre or students who are applying to continue their studies post-arrival. NCUK reviews non-standard admissions. Staff receive training in operating the centre-based admissions process. The entry criteria for each programme are published on each centre's website.

2.9 Students have the right to appeal admissions decisions made by the centres. For INTO London students can refer appeals to UoG and for INTO Manchester admissions appeals will be referred to NCUK by the centre, for consideration using the NCUK Admissions Appeals procedures. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.10 The review team considered a range of admissions information for staff and students including policies and procedures and met with senior, academic and professional support staff and students.

2.11 UKCA's responsibilities and processes for the recruitment and admissions of students are clearly defined. Central admission allows for standardised treatment of all applications conducted by professional admissions staff. There is a strong working relationship between UKCA, the staff in the INTO centres and the awarding partners. Centre staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the admissions process at both the central and centre level.

2.12 The application process to both centres is clearly laid out and easily accessible to prospective students on each centre's website. Centre applications are assessed on an individual basis. For disabled students a needs analysis and, if relevant, risk assessments may be conducted in order to ensure that a suitable learning environment can be provided. There is a defined process for referring non-standard applications at both centres. There have been no appeals against centre admissions decisions in the last three years. However, the Admissions Appeals procedures are currently not published on either Centre's website.

2.13 Students who met the review team, and who were all recruited through agents, reported that the application process was straightforward and that their experience matched the information they were provided with during the application process with some minor

exceptions.

2.14 Existing pre-arrival information is fit for purpose and effectively tailored to the intended audience. The ongoing review of pre-arrival information is building on strong foundations in this area with the centres identify opportunities for enhancing the admissions process.

2.15 The review team concludes that there are transparent and reliable admissions processes in place which are inclusive and underpinned by appropriate structures to operate and manage them. The centres discharge their limited responsibility appropriately. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.16 The INTO centres aim to provide students with the opportunity to access identified progression routes and offer a guarantee of progression upon successful completion of study on their preparatory programmes. To this end the programmes are comprehensive and make full use of opportunities to develop the required knowledge and skills. INTO Manchester has established a Learning and Teaching Leadership Group and has a strategy for teaching and learning that underpins academic quality and equal opportunity. This strategy is not explicitly articulated in policy or procedure documents but is part of the consideration of academic matters by the Academic Boards and the Joint Quality Committee.

2.17 Staff development is central to the ongoing work to maintain relevance and currency of the curriculum and staff expertise. Teaching observations are a routine part of quality assurance to review the quality of teaching. These include performance-based observations conducted by managers alongside academic observations that are part of a new centre-devised peer observation system. Feedback from students and staff contributes to the review of learning opportunities. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.18 To test the effectiveness of the centres' approaches to learning and teaching the team examined documentation relating to the teaching observation processes, staff development and student feedback systems. The review team also read relevant committee minutes and met with senior, academic and professional support staff, and students.

2.19 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and are recruited based upon their ability to maximise student achievement to enable progression to one of the partner universities in the network. All new teaching staff receive a useful induction and are also offered support in the form of an assigned mentor.

2.20 There is a requirement for all teaching staff to take part in annual teaching observations, carried out by relevant line managers. The principles of management and peer observation are outlined in the INTO-wide Observation Policy. These observations are recorded and form part of teaching staff's performance review. The peer observation system is more informal and is intended to foster and support a collegiate atmosphere. It involves the use of a reflective portfolio.

2.21 The INTO centres identify and offer staff development opportunities through mechanisms such as the Learning and Teaching Leadership Group and external online technology course for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching staff. The INTO centres also support staff in their membership of professional bodies. A budget to support this and other staff-identified forms of professional development is available.

2.22 INTO sees the use of student feedback and data as a priority for managers to enhance the quality of learning opportunities. The consideration of recruitment, admissions and results data is part of the JQC's final meeting of each academic year. The centres use

attendance and student performance data effectively and regularly to inform teaching and learning. There is evidence of effective planning and responses to the diverse needs of students. For example, each student at risk has a needs analysis. This is followed up by support tutors and the review team were provided with examples of individual cases where such support had been implemented. Students whom the review team met spoke very highly of the way they were treated upon arrival and the quality of teaching and support offered to them.

2.23 The Learning and Teaching Leadership Group meets twice each month to consider academic activities and opportunities for sharing good practice. This group was formed in February 2018, so at the time of review there had not been enough output to assess its impact or effectiveness.

2.24 Overall, the review team concludes that INTO has effective mechanisms on place to review the quality of teaching and enhance students' learning opportunities. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.25 The INTO centres are committed to providing and maintaining learning resources and student support structures that enhance the delivery of its programmes and the student experience. The learning support team offers a range of academic and pastoral support to students. The approach to the support of students, including support for students with specific learning needs, is articulated in policy and guidance material for staff and students. Responsibility for the operation and management of the student support system rests with the Academic Support Manager.

2.26 Students can self-refer via their tutors to the student support team or tutors can make direct referrals if they feel a student needs extra support. The learning support team considers each case, where necessary refers the matter to an independent expert for advice or assessment and formulates an action plan detailing the proposed support measures. A learning support tutor is assigned to each student. Pastoral needs are supported by the welfare team. Additional assessment support is agreed between the Academic Director and the Programme Manager and specified in a signed learning support contract. The centres track all learning support referrals and periodically review their support arrangements. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.27 To test the effectiveness of the student support arrangements the review team examined policy documents and guidance to staff and students. The team also met with students, and senior, academic and professional support staff.

2.28 Students are well prepared for study in the UK. All students receive a comprehensive induction that includes an introduction into to their chosen programme of study as well as an orientation to British culture and to the centres' welfare and pastoral support system. An orientation booklet provides valuable information including points of contact in centre. The centres also use alumni to give guest talks to new students. The Learning Centres at both sites provide inductions into the use of library resources and help to develop information literacy. Supporting instructional material is additionally available via the website and through the VLE. Students reported that they felt extremely welcome and valued and were able to seek guidance at any time on key matters.

2.29 The centres make good use of the VLE to provide students with access to programme specific resources such as module guides, class materials and links to further study material alongside academic policy documents. The Learning Centres in Manchester and London have their own budget and maintain an extensive range of books including of e-books and e-journals which supplement the EBSCO database. INTO Manchester students also have reference access to the University of Manchester library. Teaching staff can request resources and any resources on reading lists are routinely purchased. The adequacy of learning resource provision is monitored and reviewed using student feedback. A recent review led to the purchasing of specific books requested by students and a reorganisation of the space within the Learning Centre to provide learning zones. Students who met the review team commented favourably on the provision of appropriate accommodation and resources. They consistently praised the friendly and engaging support from teaching and support staff, the drop-in sessions and the ready access to tutors. There are effective systems in place for ongoing IT replacement such as the recent installation of new interactive displays in some classrooms with plans to equip all classrooms in this way in

the near future.

2.30 The various elements of the academic and pastoral student support system are well integrated and provide a seamless experience for students. Special educational needs are well supported and students with a disability are offered a needs analysis to ensure that a suitable learning environment is provided. A special needs and medical conditions form which all relevant students complete includes disabilities, learning difficulties and mental health issues and a student support plan is developed based on this information. To further enhance student support INTO is developing a new pre-arrival system aimed at identifying special needs in advance. It is hoped that this will allow even more effective and responsive support. Teaching staff are supported in identifying students in need of support and how to effectively support them in the classroom. Learning Support Tutors have provided training to teaching staff on these matters. Teaching staff are also offered the opportunity to acquire special educational needs qualifications.

2.31 Roles and responsibilities for the support of students are well understood by staff. Student performance is regularly monitored. Students falling below an expected level are identified as 'at risk' and are closely monitored by teaching and support staff. Manchester students receive regular tutorials. These are also used to identify additional support needs. The London Centre has recently reviewed its tutorial support arrangements and aligned it more closely with student needs. This has resulted in the appointment of a Senior Teacher (Tutoring and Coaching) who oversees the operation of the tutorial system and a focus on academic target setting in tutorials. Innovative approaches to enhancing the student experience are encouraged. An example of this is the opportunity for some students to opt out of tutorial sessions and follow a more demanding programme of coaching sessions instead.

2.32 Student attendance is closely monitored at both centres, and registers are taken for each teaching session. The Manchester centre has recently introduced an Attendance Panel which meets weekly and provides an opportunity to identify opportunities for the welfare team to conduct early interventions when attendance falls. There is evidence of effective cross-referral of students between the attendance monitoring team and the welfare team. Staff explained how they were able to quickly resolve pastoral issues identified through vigilant and effective attendance monitoring systems.

2.33 Students who met the review team were satisfied with the academic and pastoral support they receive. They particularly praised the induction process where they were introduced to systems and opportunities for academic and pastoral support. They recognised that there were mechanisms in place to identify specific support needs, such as dyslexia, and also pastoral support in deciding on progression paths. All students felt able to access policies and procedures and felt confident in using their tutor as a first point of contact in any such matter. In academic matters the support was equally highly praised by students where they cited regular feedback on their work as useful in developing their knowledge and skills and in achieving higher grades in subsequent work. The holistic approach to student support that allows academic, cultural and pastoral needs to be readily identified and addressed is a feature of **good practice**.

2.34 The INTO Centre have comprehensive and effective mechanisms in place to support students and enable them to develop their personal, academic and professional potential. The arrangements are regularly reviewed and improved. The integration of all elements of the student support system provides for a seamless student support experience. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.35 The approach to student engagement is articulated in the centres' Quality Assurance Manuals. The centres use a range of mechanisms in order to engage students in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. This includes the generation of student feedback through module and programme evaluation questionnaires and focus groups. Module evaluation analyses are discussed at Programme Committees. Feedback generated through student surveys is considered at Academic Board and the Joint Quality Committee.

2.36 There is an established student representation system and at programme level student representatives participate in programme-based student representative meetings and Programme Committees. All meetings have standing agenda items and are minuted. Comments from the student representative meetings feed into Programme Committee. Actions are recorded and made available to all students on the VLE. Both centres also operate centre-wide Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs). For these meetings a formal response is provided to students on key issues raised. INTO Manchester additionally trialled a Student Engagement Committee (SEC) which was subsequently integrated into the SSLC. Student representatives are provided with training for their role. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.37 The review team examined a range of evidence including quality manuals, student feedback questionnaires and the terms of reference, membership and minutes of relevant committees. The team also met with senior, academic and professional support staff, and students.

2.38 The student representative system works well. Student representatives from both centres were able to articulate a clear understanding of their role and confirmed that they had received training. Minutes from student representative meetings, Programme Committees and SSLC meetings demonstrate that student representatives actively contribute to the development of their programmes and the enhancement of their experience. Minutes from student representative meetings and SSLCs at INTO London indicate that actions are routinely followed up at subsequent meetings. It is less clear how actions from SSLC meetings at INTO Manchester are followed up.

2.39 The INTO centres are receptive to student feedback and see students as equal partners in the quality assurance of their programmes. INTO Manchester consulted with students on how and when they want to give feedback and INTO London trialled alternatives to staff student meetings. Student representatives are currently not members of centre Academic Boards and the Joint Quality Committee, but the centres intend to consult with students on the merit of student representation at these committees.

2.40 The specific discussion of module evaluation results by the appropriate Programme Committee is clearly recorded. Additionally, programme survey results are discussed at the appropriate Academic Board for each centre, generating actions as necessary. Staff were able to explain the role of Academic Board in bringing student feedback together and gave examples of changes made at centre level in response to student feedback. Students who met the review team perceive that they do receive feedback on issues they raise and were able to identify examples of changes made as a result of their feedback. The discussion of

aggregated student feedback from students is evident at Joint Quality Committee meetings.

2.41 The review team concludes that the INTO centres engage students appropriately at programme and centre level in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experiences. Student feedback is taken seriously and acted upon. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Findings

2.42 The responsibilities of centres for assessing students in line with the assessment regulations and procedures of their awarding bodies are outlined within their respective Quality Assurance Manuals. These vary depending on the awarding partner with INTO London having responsibility for assessment design and marking. Staff development is provided on assessment design. The newly introduced Assessment Scrutiny Panel considers assessments prior to submission to and approval by the University of Gloucestershire. First and second marking is undertaken internally, followed moderation at the University and external moderation through external examiners.

2.43 For INTO Manchester's NCUK programmes all summative assessment and examinations are set and results are moderated by the awarding organisation. INTO Manchester designs the assessment schedule and is responsible for ensuring assessment security for the final examinations. All examinations and a sample of summative assessed coursework is double marked with standardisation exercises taking place prior to marking. The centre also holds an internal moderation meeting and compiles a markers' report before external moderation by NCUK prior to the examination boards.

2.44 Programme handbooks, assessment guides, assessment briefs and grading criteria provide information to students in line with the assessment requirements outlined in the module specifications. Guidance to staff on marking and internal and external moderation procedures is contained in the respective Quality Assurance Manuals and supporting documentation.

2.45 Responsibility for the operation of examination boards rest with the awarding partners to which the centres contribute. There is a policy for the consideration of mitigating circumstances. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.46 The review team examined relevant assessment procedures as well as information available to students and staff. The team also met students, senior, teaching staff and representatives from the awarding partners.

2.47 There is comprehensive information on assessment for students and staff which is easily accessible. Students confirmed that they receive clear guidance on assessment requirements through the virtual learning environment and that they understand the assessment regulations, including academic misconduct and mitigating circumstances procedures, assessment length and late submission of work. They also advised that they receive helpful feedback on their assessed work within a reasonable timeframe. Staff were fully conversant with and felt well prepared for the purpose and processes of assessment and received guidance on the application of regulatory matters such as recognition of prior learning, mitigation, late submission, resits or turnaround of feedback.

2.48 INTO London, through its Assessment Scrutiny Panel, aims provide assessment briefs a full term to the University for approval. External examiner comments for INTO London on assessment design and marking demonstrate that assessment setting and

grading is working well at the centre.

2.49 Assessment briefs for INTO London are detailed and provide the required information. There were some inconsistencies in the level of information provided within the assessment briefs for INTO Manchester. The review team was advised that a standard template has been adopted for use across all programmes and the Higher Education Manager has created model examples to provide guidance for staff. The review team **affirms** the action taken by INTO Manchester to ensure consistency in the design of all assessment briefs.

2.50 Assessment and Examination boards operate as intended. For INTO Manchester a pre-examination board meeting considers student results, and receives reports from the external examiners, and the final examination board approves the results. The centre provides feedback to NCUK in its annual report on the assessment processes which is collated from centre markers' reports, team meetings and Programme Committee meetings. For provision in London Module Boards take place several times a year. An Award Board at the end of the academic year confirms the final results. All modular and award boards are chaired by University staff. Relevant centre staff participate in and contribute to examination board meetings in line with the awarding partners' requirements as evidenced by the minutes of examination board meetings. Students with mitigating circumstances and cases of academic misconduct are appropriately considered. At INTO Manchester an initial meeting is held to discuss students with special circumstances and cases of academic misconduct. For INTO London an internal Academic Offence Board meets prior to the modular examination boards.

2.51 Overall, the review team concludes that the INTO centres operate valid and reliable assessment arrangements that allow students to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.**Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining****Findings**

2.52 External examiners are appointed and trained by the awarding partners but INTO London is responsible for finding and proposing suitable candidates with appropriate and recent experience. Reports from external examiners are received by the awarding partners and then shared with the centres where they are analysed by programme teams and used to feed into annual programme monitoring reports. They also inform the agendas of the Academic Boards and the Joint Quality Committee. External examiner reports are made accessible to all students on the VLE. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.53 In testing the effectiveness of the institution's approach of the use of its external examiners the review team examined external examiner reports and relevant committee minutes. The team also met with senior and academic staff and students.

2.54 The centres have clear processes for the consideration of external examiner reports. Committee minutes demonstrate that they are appropriately considered and actioned as part of ongoing quality review by Programme Committees, Academic Boards and the Joint Quality Committee. Annual programme reports show that feedback from external examiners is incorporated into programme monitoring.

2.55 At INTO London the external examiners reports are shared with students by publishing them on the VLE. This same practice is not replicated at INTO Manchester due to the nature of the reports which confidential information. Instead the reports are analysed, and a condensed version is published within the annual report on the VLE.

2.56 The processes and systems used by INTO centres demonstrate effective use of external examiner reports to maintain and enhance students' learning opportunities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.57 The centres follow the requirements of their awarding partners for programme monitoring and review. The processes are set out in the respective Quality Assurance Manuals and standard templates are used for the production of annual programme monitoring reports. Reports are considered by Programme Committees and the Academic Board of each centre has oversight of the programme and monitoring review processes. The outcomes from annual monitoring undertaken within the centres is considered by the Joint Quality Committee and feed into the respective awarding partner's review processes. For INTO Manchester the resulting annual report is reviewed by NCUK's Delivery Quality Committee (DQC) and its comments are fed back to the centre. For INTO London the report is considered as part of the annual partnership review meeting.

2.58 In addition, the awarding partners operate periodic review processes for their provision. NCUK conducts general audits of INTO Manchester's provision and INTO London programmes are subject to periodic review for which the centre prepares the relevant documentation, whereas the event is conducted by the University of Gloucestershire according to its periodic review procedures. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.59 The review team examined procedures for the review and monitoring of programmes, scrutinised relevant reports and committee minutes, and met with senior, teaching staff and professional services staff.

2.60 Annual programme monitoring reports and action plans meet the requirements of the awarding partners and take account of feedback from students, staff and external examiners. All reports contain appropriate action plans. In addition, student data is considered for both centres whereby the analysis of performance, achievement and progression information is reflected in the discussion and actions arising out Programme Committees. NCUK shares data on student achievement with INTO Manchester, however INTO London was unable to receive post-progression data as data sharing agreements are not in place across the 110 affiliated Universities.

2.61 There is systematic and effective oversight of the monitoring processes through the relevant committees. Academic Board minutes confirm that the committee discharges its responsibility for the oversight of programme annual monitoring at each centre. Minutes of the Joint Quality Committee also demonstrate effective institutional oversight of the process. Furthermore, INTO London's Development Plan captures actions arising out of annual programme monitoring and annual partnership reviews integrating the monitoring process into strategic planning. A similar plan will be introduced for INTO Manchester from next academic year.

2.62 Periodic review and audit reports from the awarding partners demonstrate that the centres maintain appropriate academic standards and learning opportunities.

2.63 The review team concludes that there are robust processes in place for the monitoring and review of programmes which demonstrate rigorous adherence to the requirements of the awarding partners for the maintenance of academic standards and the

enhancement of learning opportunities. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.64 The centres' responsibilities for academic appeals and complaints vary depending on the awarding partner. For INTO London responsibility for both appeals and complaints is shared with the awarding body whereas for INTO Manchester the responsibility for academic appeals rests with the awarding organisation.

2.65 INTO London has published a Mitigating Circumstances, Appeals and Complaints Policy which is based on that of its awarding body. For academic appeals the policy sets out the grounds for appeals and the procedure for considering them which includes the right to escalate appeals to the awarding body. For complaints the policy sets out who may make a complaint and the timescale for resolution with an emphasis on early informal resolution. The University of Gloucestershire monitors the number of formal concerns raised by students. A copy of the Mitigating Circumstances, Appeals and Complaints Policy is included in the student handbook.

2.66 The INTO Manchester centre handbook for students sets out the complaints procedure in full, including in a diagrammatic form. It specifies the procedure for academic and non-academic complaints. A simplified version of the procedure is also set out in the Student Guide to INTO Manchester. Staff can access the procedure through the VLE. Academic appeals are dealt with under NCUK Policy. The programme handbooks broadly set out the NCUK appeals process. A fee is charged for academic appeals which is refunded if the appeal is successful. Both centres currently do not fall under the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.67 The review team considered a range of evidence including policies and procedures relating to academic appeals and student complaints as well as information for students and staff. The team also met with academic and professional support staff, and students.

2.68 The centres' policies and procedures for academic appeals and student complaints are fit for purpose and easily accessible for students and staff. Students who met the review team reported that the complaints and appeals procedures are clearly set out in the handbooks and are available on the VLE.

2.69 The procedures are well understood, and staff were able to describe the measures taken by the centres to ensure that staff involved in the consideration of complaints and appeals are suitably independent. Staff explained that the setting of a fee for appeals in the NCUK academic appeals procedure is in line with the procedures of other awarding organisations regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and do not perceive this to be a barrier to access.

2.70 Complaints are carefully logged, including the resolution stage reached. Monitoring data indicates that the numbers of complaints and appeals are very low and almost all of them are resolved informally. The outcomes of complaints and appeals are used at programme and centre level to inform enhancements.

2.71 The review team concludes the INTO centres have robust policies and procedures in place that are fair, accessible and enable enhancement. The Expectation is met and the

associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.72 INTO does not deliver learning opportunities with organisations other than its awarding partners.

Expectation: Not applicable

Level of risk: Not applicable

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.73 INTO does not deliver research degrees, therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

Expectation: Not applicable

Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.74 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.75 Of the 11 Expectations in this judgement area, nine Expectations are applicable to the provider, all of which are judged to be met with a low associated risk. Expectation 10 is not applicable as the provider does not deliver learning opportunities with any organisation other than its awarding partners. Equally, Expectation 11 is not applicable as the provider does not offer research degrees.

2.76 The review team did not identify any recommendations. There is one features of good practice in this judgement area which is located in Expectation B4. It concerns the provider's holistic approach to student support. There is also one affirmation in Expectation B6 relating to the actions the provider has taken to ensure consistency in assessment brief design.

2.77 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The INTO centres publish a range of information for prospective and current students, staff and other stakeholders in digital and print formats. The central INTO University Partnerships website describes the mission, values and strategy of the whole organisation. There is also a corporate student facing website containing programme and admissions information for prospective students worldwide. The centres' websites reflect this information and contain admissions information including academic entry and English language requirements, programme and student support information as well as progression opportunities to UK universities as applicable to the centre. INTO Manchester has three different centre websites representing the programmes offered under the partnerships with the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University and the general programmes at the centre. Each contains the type of information described above.

3.2 In addition, prospective students have access to programme and admission information through centre specific brochures. Specific pre-arrival information is provided to students through a welcome guide. A project is currently underway to further improve this information. For Manchester students an orientation guide on living in the UK and an accommodation guide are also available.

3.3 Both centres have social media pages which are used for marketing purposes and general communication with current students for social events, key dates or announcements. A Partner Portal containing programme information and an application submission and tracking function is available for recruitment agents.

3.4 The VLE for each centre houses a raft of information for current students including programme documentation, learning materials and handbooks. In addition, students also receive a print copy of centre handbooks, programme specific handbooks and for Manchester students the NCUK student handbook. INTO Manchester students can access onward progression information via the NCUK website. Centre policies, quality assurance procedures and handbooks for staff are also available through each centre's VLE or shared drives. Meeting minutes are accessible via the same channels. In addition, there is a specific staff handbook for each centre.

3.5 Transcripts for completing students that include the level of study and credit values of modules are provided by NCUK for Manchester students. INTO London issues transcripts for its students and the awarding body provides the qualifications certificate.

3.6 The centres have a Public Information Statement which sets out the processes for production and verification of printed and digital promotional materials such as brochures, websites and social media pages and applications including responsibilities for production and sign-off of materials and the role of awarding partners in the process. The Joint Quality Committee is responsible for overseeing the quality of public information across the Manchester and London centres. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.7 The review team examined a range of printed and digital information for prospective and current students, staff and other stakeholders including brochures and guides, websites and the virtual learning environment. The team also scrutinised the procedures for the production and approval of information and met with senior, academic and professional support staff, and students.

3.8 Information provided to prospective students in print format and through the various websites is comprehensive, enables them to make informed decisions and prepares them well for study and living in the UK. Students who met the review team confirmed that they had all the necessary information available to them and that pre-arrival information was helpful. The centre website was praised as user-friendly.

3.9 Programme, assessment, progression and student support information in handbooks for current students is detailed and all documents are easily accessible to students on the VLE. Students were able to clearly articulate where to find information and confirmed that the VLE is widely used as an information tool. Student handbooks and module guides are regularly updated with Programme Managers checking accuracy and confirming changes.

3.10 Information production and sign-off responsibilities are clearly articulated and well understood by centre staff. All print and digital promotional material is designed and produced by a central team. Centre Directors sign off brochures and supplementary materials, consulting with the awarding partners where necessary. Similarly, there is a central content production team for the centre websites and the partner portal. Academic information is ratified by Centre Directors. Regular meetings are held by the team and each centre to check the accuracy of information and enhance its quality and presentation. Staff acknowledged the challenges of keeping information up to date and accurate across a range of platforms. The review was informed that in the near future a content management system will be the source of all material. This will enable any changes or inaccuracies to be amended in one place only and will feed through to the student-facing website and the partner portal.

3.11 The centres' Quality Assurance Manuals are clearly dated and specify the date for review. This is not the case for centre specific policies.

3.12 Overall, the review team concludes that the information produced for prospective and current students, staff and external stakeholders is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The mechanisms to ensure currency and accuracy of information are robust. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.13 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.14 The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low. There are no recommendations and affirmations in this judgement area.

3.15 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 The Enhancement Strategy contained in the centres' Quality Assurance Manuals establishes processes and procedures to promote the enhancement of teaching and learning. It also identifies centre level areas for enhancement, goals for each area together with actions and procedures for evidencing and review of progress. The strategy is supplemented by a Good Practice and Enhancement Policy. It draws together the ways in which good practice is defined, identified, disseminated and impact measured.

4.2 The centres' governance structures underpin the implementation of the policy. The Joint Quality Committee is responsible for overseeing the enhancement of the quality of provision and the learning experience across the centres, ensuring mechanisms are in place at each centre to enable enhancement initiatives to be identified, captured and reflected upon. Information from students, staff and external stakeholders is used to inform centre enhancement initiatives which feed into relevant action and development plans. Their progress is monitored by the respective Academic Board. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3 The review team reviewed a range of systematically generated quality assurance information, policies and procedures, and relevant committee minutes. The team also met with senior, teaching and professional support staff, and students.

4.4 The centres systematically generate robust information from students, staff and other stakeholders as part of routine quality assurance procedures. This includes student feedback from student representative meetings, Staff-Student Liaison Committees, Programme Committees, module evaluations, student arrival and exit surveys, external examiner comments and external quality assurance reports. This information informs quality assurance reports and action plans such as programme monitoring reports and centre development plans which are routinely considered at centre level. Minutes from centre Academic Boards and JQC demonstrate appropriate consideration of quality assurance information and identification of enhancement initiatives at centre level.

4.5 Consideration of quality assurance information also identifies good practice and opportunities for further improvement which inform the development of enhancement initiatives at a strategic level. In discussion with the review team, staff provided examples of improvements to the quality of learning opportunities that had been identified by the JQC, including further advancements to the VLE and the development of a compulsory personal, social and economic health programme for students. The review team was also advised on formal staff networks across the centres, such as the Placement Officers, which enabled improved advice to students on their progression opportunities. The sharing of good practice to enhance learning and teaching had been achieved through the INTO-wide conference that had enabled staff to develop new ways of engaging students in the classroom.

4.6 The review team concludes that the centres have a strategic approach to the enhancement of students' learning opportunities. The Expectation is met with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.7 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.8 The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low. There are no recommendations and affirmations in this judgement area.

4.9 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#).

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer Glossary on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx.

Academic standards

The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Awarding organisation

An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'. See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical

term in our review processes.

Expectations

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

Framework

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS).

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Multiple awards

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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