

# Review for Specific Course Designation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

## Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd

November 2013

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## Key findings about Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd

As a result of its Review for specific Course Designation carried out in November 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of University of Essex.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of this awarding body.

The team considers that reliance **can be** placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

### Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the use of electronic communication to enable freelance tutors to participate in programme management (paragraph 1.2)
- the significant levels of student engagement (paragraph 1.4)
- the extensive use of external reference points (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.3)
- the rigorous verification of student assessment (paragraph 1.8)
- the effective use of the virtual learning environments (paragraphs 2.10 and 3.2).

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- consider extending the use of Edge Hotel School standard assessment brief templates to the University of Essex Online programmes (paragraph 1.9)
- formalise the learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 2.4)
- develop a formalised procedure for peer review (paragraph 2.5).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)<sup>1</sup> conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd (KOL), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the University of Essex (the University). The review was carried out by Mr Duncan Lean, Professor Danny Morton, Ms Barbara Thomas (reviewers) and Mrs Catherine Fairhurst (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding body, and meetings with staff and students.

The review team also considered KOL's use of the relevant external reference points:

- Guidelines provided by the University
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

KOL is a limited company within Kaplan UK and the Kaplan Inc group. It has had a cooperation agreement with the University since 2007. KOL comprises two divisions, University of Essex Online (UoEO) and Edge Hotel School (EHS). The total number of students is currently 870.

UoEO delivers higher education programmes online to 788 part-time geographically dispersed, non-traditional students. There are enrolment points throughout the year. The UoEO has 27 permanent employees, six of whom are academic staff together with 45 freelance teaching staff.

EHS is a hotel school where 82 full-time students help to run Wivenhoe House Hotel, a hotel in the grounds of the University, as an integral part of their programmes. The Edge Hotel School employs 12 permanent members of staff and freelance teaching specialists. Wivenhoe House Hotel employs professional hotel staff who are student mentors.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, with student numbers in brackets:

### **University of Essex Online (UoEO)**

FdA Business and Management (204)

FdA Criminal Justice (11)

FdA Criminal Justice (Police) (42)

FdA Criminal Justice (Probation) (35)

FdA Criminal Justice (Custodial Services) (8)

FdA Criminal Justice (Youth Justice) (24)

FdA Financial Services (5)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

FdA Leadership & Management (11)  
FdA Marketing and Sales Management (24)  
BA (Hons) Business and Management (265)  
BA (Hons) Business and Marketing (23)  
BA (Hons) Criminal Justice (46)  
BA (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice (59)  
MSc Business and Management (12)  
Post Graduate Diploma Business and Management (1)  
Post Graduate Certificate Business and Management (2)  
MBA (5)  
MSc Infection Control (1)  
Post Graduate Diploma Infection Control (2)  
Post Graduate Certificate Infection Control (2)

### **Edge Hotel School**

FdA Culinary Management (4)  
FdA Hotel Management (30)  
BA (Hons) Culinary Management (2)  
BA (Hons) Hotel Management (46)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The management of standards and the quality of the higher education provision is set out in Memoranda of Cooperation Agreement with the University. The overall responsibility for the standards of the validated provision remains with the University. KOL is responsible for the management of standards and the monitoring of the quality of learning opportunities, as specified within the agreements. This includes admissions, tuition and assessment. KOL shares the responsibility with the awarding body for programme design, quality reviews, staff development, student support, resources and information.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on the higher education programmes were invited to present a submission to the review team. UoEO students produced a submission with administrative support from UoEO. The students completed a questionnaire; they then discussed the outcome of the survey in a telephone conference with a student chairman. The team found their submission useful. A group of students met the Coordinator by telephone conferencing at the preparatory meeting in advance of the visit and six students representing both divisions participated in a meeting during the review. Their contribution was constructive and helpful.

## Detailed findings about Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd

### 1 Academic standards

#### How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd (KOL) has an effective process for the management of academic standards with clear reporting lines to the awarding body. The cooperation agreement with the University of Essex (the University) clearly specifies each partner's responsibilities with a comprehensive set of policy documents for both the University of Essex Online (UoEO) and the Edge Hotel School (EHS).

1.2 An established committee structure oversees the management of the higher education provision. The Joint Academic Management Board and the Curriculum, Quality and Recruitment Group are responsible for curriculum, quality, and academic standards. Programme committees report to the appropriate Faculty Board and consider the delivery of programmes, student opinion, second marker feedback and the External Examiner reports. The UoEO meetings take place electronically through the virtual platform enabling freelance tutors to participate in programme management and is **good practice**.

1.3 There is an effective working relationship between the provider and its awarding body. KOL annually reviews programmes in accordance with the awarding body's requirements. UoEO also reviews programmes quarterly reflecting patterns of student enrolment and meetings of boards of examiners. The committees' minutes demonstrate that the monitoring and review of academic standards are effectively and carefully considered.

1.4 KOL fully engages students in quality assurance processes. Students are represented on all programme committees, programme validation and periodic review panels. Students have electronic access to all minutes and documents of the committees and external examiner reports. Students say that KOL responds positively to their feedback. This significant level of student engagement in quality processes is **good practice**.

#### How effectively does the provider make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.5 KOL makes full use of external reference points to manage academic standards. It engages with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) through its partnership with the University, by mapping policies, procedures and practices, and by briefing staff. The relevant subject benchmark statements and industry practices inform the academic programmes. These are designed and validated according to the awarding body's quality procedures. The awards reflect *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ).

1.6 There are extensive links with employers and commercial hospitality organisations; EHS consults widely with the industry in the development of the programmes; industrial representatives participate in programme design and deliver guest lectures; programme validation panels always have an external industrial member; Wivenhoe House Hotel Board members are surveyed on work-based module development and the Institute of Leadership and Management accredit UoEO business and management modules.

## How does the provider use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?

1.7 External moderation, verification and examining processes are thorough. KOL is responsible for setting assessments, moderation, marking, providing feedback to students and responding to external examiner reports. KOL systematically observes the awarding body's requirements. It's staff are members of the awarding body's boards of examiners.

1.8 There is a rigorous process for internal verification and second marking of assessments which helps to ensure the standard of marking within individual modules. For example, KOL mark 10 per cent of assessed work twice during the delivery of a module to ensure any corrections can inform the students' current learning. The boards of examiners consider individual detailed comments from second markers, and the overall comments of each tutor from a spreadsheet. This rigorous internal verification of student assessment is **good practice**.

1.9 Tutors assess UoEO students' online assignments against generic assessment criteria but the amount of feedback is not always consistent. EHS uses standard templates to give students full developmental feedback on their assignments. It would be **desirable** for KOL to consider the use of this template to inform assessment approaches at UoEO.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of its awarding body.

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

### How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 KOL effectively fulfils its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. The processes reflect those for managing academic standards, as described in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.4. KOL is responsible for teaching and learning, and staff development across all the programmes. The management of student support and learning resources is shared with the awarding body. This is monitored by the Joint Academic Management Board and the Curriculum, Quality and Recruitment Group: committees chaired by the awarding body.

### How effectively does the provider make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?

2.2 KOL takes appropriate account of relevant sections of the Quality Code to inform its policies and procedures relating to the management of learning opportunities, as described in paragraph 1.5.

2.3 A particular feature of the EHS programmes is the continuous external referencing and emphasis on employability as described in paragraph 1.6. The institutional review of the awarding body commended the programme team on the approach taken to optimise the employment opportunities of students. EHS students work with professional staff and undertake work-based learning at Wivenhoe House Hotel on a rotating basis as a key part of their programme. The Principal of EHS is a member of the Wivenhoe House Hotel Ltd Board and the UoEO students who are in employment have work-based mentor support. This extensive use of external reference points to maintain academic standards and to enhance students' learning opportunities is **good practice**.

### **How does the provider assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?**

2.4 External examiners, annual monitoring reports and student feedback provide evidence that oversight of the quality of learning and teaching is maintained. There is not yet an overall formal strategy to direct KOL's overall approach to teaching and learning, although UoEO has developed a draft strategy which focuses on the student learning experience. EHS learning and teaching approaches are described in the student handbook. Students report that they are very satisfied with the quality and variety of teaching. It would be **desirable** for KOL to publish a learning and teaching strategy to assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being enhanced.

2.5 KOL has no consolidated system of peer review or peer observation of teaching. The assessment spreadsheet described in paragraph 1.8 is an effective means of tracking and monitoring individual tutor performance at UoEO. Programme leaders mentor new freelance tutors but evaluation of individual teaching quality does not contribute to either staff appraisal or staff development. It would be **desirable** for KOL combines the different elements of tutor review into a formal peer review process that ensures consistency and meets the needs of all staff.

2.6 The students express their views through comprehensive formal and informal processes, including the National Student Survey, module and programme student surveys, personal tutorials and good access to staff. UoEO students can express their views in a recently introduced Student Feedback Forum, EHS has a Student Staff Liaison Committee for the same purpose. The National Student Surveys have high response and satisfaction rates. The Academic Administrator analyses the results of these surveys and includes student adviser and tutor comments, which are considered by the senior management team and programme committees.

### **How does the provider assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.7 KOL has well-established and robust systems to support the students on programmes which have two different modes of delivery. A range of formal and informal support mechanisms are available for UoEO students, including dedicated student support advisors, module tutors and online pastoral support. The online Student and Tutor Academic Resource provides study skills for UoEO students, and EHS students have face-to-face access to academic mentors and academic practitioners, and work with professional staff in the Wivenhoe House Hotel environment. The University's 2013 institutional review commended UoEO on the level of pastoral support for students. Student surveys give high satisfaction scores for student support and the students confirm this in person.

2.8 There are comprehensive student recruitment and induction procedures. The Admissions and Eligibility Policy of UoEO is designed to meets the needs of mature students and evaluates their academic potential, achievements and experience. Induction for UoEO students is managed by student advisers and undertaken online during a welcome week. Students say this is helpful to introduce them to the online learning programmes. EHS organises a visit day to support admissions information on the website and has a thorough induction programme.



### **How effectively does the provider develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.9 Kaplan UK has an established staff development process and new employees undertake a one-day induction to introduce the Kaplan values. Tutors newly appointed to UoEO complete a Tutor Training Module and they are allocated a mentor. There is an annual online appraisal system for full-time staff, including goal setting and personal development for the following year. All EHS academic staff are required to complete the Kaplan Way Instructional Design course as part of their continuous professional development.

2.10 Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced and all the EHS teaching staff have appropriate industry experience. The staff have access to the University's learning and development workshops, and are able to undertake postgraduate qualifications in higher education. Good practice is disseminated in the Tutor Virtual Staffroom. A staff development budget funds external training and development linked to appraisal for permanent staff. Freelance tutors at UoEO are responsible for their own continuing personal development and they submit annual curriculum vitae to inform KOL staff records.

### **How effectively does the provider ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?**

2.11 Wivenhoe House Hotel provides EHS students with excellent practical resources to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Commercial enterprises provide room and equipment sponsorship, guest lectures and scholarships. The students have access to the University's academic resources, including the library and electronic resources. Some minor concerns were expressed by students about the lack of specialist onsite library provision but confirmed that resources overall were of a high standard. Some aspects of the EHS experience are delivered online in a virtual learning environment (VLE).

2.12 The resources for UoEO students are focused on online delivery and on meeting the needs of adult, off-site learners who study remotely. These include a comprehensive learning platform with pre-recorded lectures, module content summaries, embedded links to further reading and telephone conferencing. Permanent staff manage the operation and content of the learning platform and the students receive free hard copies of all core texts. The students confirm the resources are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes of their modules.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

## **3 Information about learning opportunities**

### **How effectively does the provider communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?**

3.1 KOL's information is professional in appearance, well presented, current and effective in communicating with students and all other stakeholders. There are two websites, one for UoEO and one for EHS, each containing a range of useful information about the higher education provision. Both websites contain information on applications, programmes, finances, learning outcomes, assessment and student support. They are user-friendly in



terms of navigation and layout, ensuring that relevant information for applicants and other stakeholders is easy to locate. The websites provide regular news and events for potential students. These websites do not provide easily accessible electronic links to the VLEs for staff or students, however, students are provided with details of the link when they enrol.

3.2 The extensive VLEs contain all published student information, including comprehensive student handbooks, assessment information, and access to learning resources. The VLEs are constantly under review; in module surveys all the UoEO students, rated the quality and usefulness of the online learning material as excellent or good. The effective use of the VLEs is **good practice**.

3.3 Academic and professional hotel staff at EHS attend module information sessions which give them an understanding of content and delivery of all modules. This initiative contributes to strong relationships, and shared knowledge and understanding between the academic and professional staff.

### **How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?**

3.4 KOL has effective mechanisms for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The University approves all new materials, including those for the website, prior to publication. Publications are developed either in-house for UoEO programmes or, with the aid of an external marketing agency for those of EHS, with ample opportunity for revision and academic team involvement as well as other stakeholders. Student handbooks are developed by KOL using the University's template, with contributions from appropriate academic and support staff. Where appropriate, EHS makes use of the University literature on campus facilities and has partner-agreed branding guidelines. EHS provides guidance on the use of social media for students in the student handbook. UoEO and the awarding body have recently introduced a jointly funded marketing post.

3.5 KOL constantly reviews published materials, including websites, and student and staff feedback contributes to these reviews. Tutors and academic staff continuously update student handbooks and module material ensuring currency of information and relevance to the subject. These processes meet the requirements of the awarding body and ensure that there are multiple opportunities for assuring that new and existing information is accurate and trustworthy, as well as ensuring its currency.

The team concludes that reliance **can be** placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd action plan relating to the Review of Specific Course Designation, November 2013						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the use of electronic communication to enable freelance tutors to participate in programme management (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>University of Essex Online</u></b></p> <p>Continue to offer freelance tutors the opportunity to attend course committees and other quality processes such as programme validation and periodic review in a virtual environment</p>	<p>Review the software used to conduct virtual meetings to identify the most appropriate application</p> <p>Ensure freelance tutors receive appropriate training to use virtual meeting software</p> <p>Include relevant information in the Tutor</p>	<p>Second quarter 2014</p> <p>Third quarter 2014</p> <p>Third quarter 2014</p>	<p>Academic Director</p> <p>Academic Director</p> <p>Academic Director</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>	<p>Committee minutes (minuted attendees) and validation and review reports</p>

<sup>3</sup> Kaplan Open Learning has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with Kaplan Open Learning's awarding bodies.

		Bulletin				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the significant levels of student engagement (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>University of Essex Online and Edge Hotel School</u></b></p> <p>Student engagement levels in quality assurance processes are effectively maintained, monitored and developed</p>	<p>Provide sufficient notice to students of the dates of Course Committee and Faculty Board to allow sufficient time for requested items to be added to the agenda</p> <p>Make Faculty Board and Course Committee minutes available to students in a timely manner</p>	<p>14 days prior to each Course Committee/ Faculty Board</p> <p>Within 14 days of the meeting taking place</p>	<p>Quality Manager for University of Essex Online/ Academic Operations Manager for Edge Hotel School</p> <p>Quality Manager for University of Essex Online/ Academic Operations Manager for Edge Hotel School</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p> <p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Course Committee minutes</p> <p>Faculty Board and Course Committee minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extensive use of external reference points (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.3)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>University of Essex Online</u></b></p> <p>All staff are informed of developments in external reference points</p> <p>Professional accreditations for the</p>	<p>A report on changes to external reference points is discussed at Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>	<p>Faculty Board on 3 February 2014 and each board thereafter</p>	<p>Quality Manager for Faculty Board</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board minutes</p>

	MBA programme		Partnership Management Board on 4 February 2014 and each meeting thereafter	Academic Partnerships Manager for Partnership Management Board		
		An introduction to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education is included in the staff induction	First quarter 2014	Quality Manager	Faculty Board	Induction plans/schedules
		Complete applications for accreditation of professional associations in relation to the MBA programme	First quarter 2014	Head of Marketing & Product Development	Faculty Board	Feedback from professional bodies
	<b><u>Edge Hotel School</u></b>					
	Students have access to industry professionals and appropriate work based learning to inform their professional and academic development.	The new principal of Edge Hotel School to retain membership (not as a company director but by invitation) on the Wivenhoe House Hotel Ltd Board	First quarter 2014	Principal	Wivenhoe Board meetings/ Faculty Board	Wivenhoe Board meeting minutes
		Establish a schedule of guest lecturers from industry professionals	Second quarter 2014	Vice Principal	Annual monitoring reports	Published schedule of guest lectures
• the rigorous verification of	<b><u>University of Essex Online and Edge Hotel</u></b>	Produce a second marking schedule	Quarterly	Programme leaders	Board of Examiners	Second marking

student assessment (paragraph 1.8)	<b>School</b> Verification and second marking is conducted in a timely and effective manner to inform student's current learning	Make second marking comments available to external examiners prior to the Board of Examiners				schedule External examiner reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective use of the virtual learning environments (paragraphs 2.10 and 3.2).</li> </ul>	<b>University of Essex Online</b>  Virtual learning environments are up to date  A virtual learning environment development plan is created	Review virtual learning environment 'roadmap' to ensure that developments enhance the efficacy of the virtual learning environment	First quarter 2014	Academic Director	Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board	Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board minutes  Satisfaction with the learning platform evidenced in end of module reviews
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b>	<b>Target date/s</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b>
The team considers that it would be <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider extending the use of Edge Hotel School standard assessment brief templates</li> </ul>	<b>University of Essex Online</b>  To provide consistent feedback on student assignments in terms of structure and amount	Review the Edge Hotel School standard assessment and feedback templates to adapt where	First quarter 2014	Academic Director	Faculty Board	Faculty Board minutes

to the University of Essex Online programmes (paragraph 1.9)		possible to meet the requirements on online delivery  Implement any recommendations resulting from the review of the Edge Hotel School assessment and feedback templates	Second quarter 2014	Academic Director	Faculty Board	Faculty Board minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise the learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 2.4)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>University of Essex Online</u></b></p> <p>A published teaching and learning strategy which reflects the ethos and practices of both Kaplan and the University of Essex</p> <p><b><u>Edge Hotel School</u></b></p> <p>Publish a teaching and learning strategy</p>	<p>Consult with the University of Essex in relation to developments in their Education Strategy</p> <p>Submit the draft strategy incorporating any changes as a result of tutor consultation, and consultation with University of Essex to Faculty Board</p> <p>Review existing documentation and consolidate all aspects of the teaching and learning strategy currently</p>	<p>Second quarter 2014</p> <p>Second quarter 2014</p> <p>Second quarter 2014</p>	<p>Academic Director</p> <p>Academic Director</p> <p>Vice Principal</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p> <p>Faculty Board</p> <p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>	<p>Published teaching and learning strategy and Faculty Board minutes</p> <p>Faculty Board minutes</p> <p>Minutes of Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>

		<p>contained within validation documents and student handbooks into one document</p> <p>Use Kaplan Open Learning (Essex) Ltd drafted Learning and Teaching strategy</p> <p>Align this with the University of Essex Education Strategy</p> <p>Circulate document for comments from academic team</p> <p>Submit consolidated document to the Faculty Board and then to the University of Essex</p>	<p>Third quarter 2014</p> <p>Third quarter 2014</p>	<p>Academic Operations Manager</p> <p>Academic Operations Manager</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p> <p>Faculty Board</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p> <p>Published teaching and learning strategy</p> <p>Faculty Board minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a formalised procedure for peer review (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>University of Essex Online</u></b></p> <p>A formalised process of peer review which is appropriate for online delivery</p>	<p>Consolidate all aspects of current peer review activities into one process</p> <p>Produce a procedure</p>	<p>Second quarter 2014</p>	<p>Academic Director</p>	<p>Faculty Board and Partnership Management Board</p>	<p>Faculty Board minutes and Partnership Management Board minutes</p>



		document				Annual monitoring reports
	<b><u>Edge Hotel School</u></b>					
	Develop a systematic module review system to allow continuous improvement on operational level	Formalise draft of systematic review system: module tutors to review various aspects of their delivery (study days, virtual learning environment content, assignments and so on)	End of February 2014	Vice Principal	End of February 2014	Annual monitoring reports
		Communicate review system to the team	First quarter 2014	Vice Principal	Vice Principal	Annual monitoring reports
		Use peer observation guidelines/forms provided by the University of Essex Learning & Development team	First quarter 2014	Academic Team to schedule peer reviews	Vice Principal	Annual monitoring reports
		Start process of peer reviews (two observations per academic year) reviewed in 1-2-1 with Vice Principal	Second quarter 2014	Academic Team	Vice Principal	Annual monitoring reports

## About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review of Courses Specifically Designated for Student Support can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx).

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<sup>4</sup>

**academic quality** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

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

**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).

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

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Specific Courses Designation, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

**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 QAA's review processes.

**external examiner** An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

**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*.

**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 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.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

**operational definition** A formal definition of a term, which establishes 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.

**provider(s) (of higher education)** Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

**public information** Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**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. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

**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.

**threshold academic standards** 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 for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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