Higher Education Review of King's College London

June 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at King's College London. The review took place from 7 to 9 June 2016, and was conducted by a team of five reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Michael Byde
- Professor John Feather
- Dr Susannah Lamb
- Professor David Lamburn
- Miss Mishal Saeed (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by King's College London and to make judgements as to whether or not its 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, 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
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

In reviewing King's College London the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The themes for the academic year 2015-16 are Student Employability and Digital Literacy,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process. The theme for this review is Student Employability.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages:
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about King's College London

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at King's College London.

- The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of the awards offered **meet** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of 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 features of **good practice** at King's College London.

- The comprehensive approach to, and engagement of students and staff in, initiatives which widen access to King's (Expectation B2).
- The capitalisation, by King's, on its world-renowned strengths, which provides opportunities for students at all levels to participate in a research culture (Expectation B3).
- The provision of a range of cocurricular and other opportunities contributing to students' life skills and employability, which are strategically planned, widely available and well-regarded (Expectation B4, Enhancement).

Recommendation

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation** to King's College London.

By June 2017:

- ensure that all intermediate awards have positively defined learning outcomes at the appropriate level (Expectation A1).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that King's College London is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The steps being taken to address inconsistencies in assessment and feedback (Expectation B6).
- The steps being taken to strengthen quality assurance mechanisms for international collaborative partnerships (Expectation B10.)

Theme: Student Employability

Employability is a significant enhancement theme for King's, and leveraging its location in central London to benefit student employability is an important strand of the institution's Employability Strategy. King's has a demonstrable capacity to build local partnerships providing opportunities for students, and students speak very highly of the curricular and cocurricular opportunities available to enhance their life skills and employability.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining Higher Education Review.

About King's College London

The origins of King's College London (King's/the institution) lie in its establishment by Royal Charter in 1829; seven years later it became a founding college of the University of London. In recent years King's has grown and developed through a sequence of mergers, and now operates over five campuses (three of them hospital-based) in or near central London, though its Department of Defence Studies is located at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham. King's regards external engagement as central to both teaching and research, and as well as having a range of partnerships in Health, Dentistry and Medicine, it is the academic pivot of King's Health Partners' Academic Health Sciences Centre, created in partnership with its three NHS Foundation trust partners.

A member of the Russell Group of research-intensive institutions, King's was ranked 27th in the 2015-16 Times Higher Education World University Rankings; and in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework 40 per cent of its submitted research (in 27 units) was judged world-leading. The current mission statement, which specifies dedication to 'the advancement of knowledge, learning and understanding in the service of society', is developed in the Strategic Plan and subsequent Strategic Review, which commit King's to becoming 'an outstanding university institution comparable in all respects with the best in the world'. Its new Strategic Vision, 'King's Futures', is under development.

Academically, King's is organised around eight faculties grouped into two clusters (Arts & Sciences, and Health) and variously subdivided into departments, divisions, institutes or centres. The King's Graduate School operates outside the faculty structure. Of the roughly 27,500 students, some 38 per cent are postgraduates (70 per cent of whom are full-time), and almost 10 per cent are reading for a research degree. Off campus, one programme is provided through a validation arrangement (with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art); a number of joint degree and dual award programmes are on offer; and a small but growing number of students are taking their degree by blended or distance learning.

King's was subject to an Institutional Audit by QAA in November 2009. This had a successful outcome, with four features of good practice and six recommendations, of which two were enhancement-oriented. A mid-cycle follow-up in December 2012 confirmed that good progress had been made in meeting all six recommendations.

Changes since the 2009 Audit include: an academic reorganisation (which included the establishment of the College Assessment and Standards Committee to exercise responsibility for quality assurance); the appointment of a new Principal and senior academic and administrative officers; and the adoption of new academic strategies (including Education; International; Widening Participation; and Enhancing Student Employability).

King's cites as its major external challenges those affecting the higher education sector as a whole, but particularly in London. Its response involves achieving constructive investment through increasing student numbers; diversifying the student population; expanding provision in Technology, Engineering and Business; and developing further partnerships with prestigious overseas universities. It stresses the importance of doing so in the context of a commitment both to academic quality and standards, and to maintaining a supportive and collegial working environment.

Explanation of the findings about King's College London

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

Explanation of the findings about King's College London

1 Judgement: The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards

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 Institutional procedures for programme approval and amendment require confirmation that all relevant external reference points have been addressed and that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the FHEQ. Annual and periodic review, both of which involve external scrutiny by well-briefed external specialists, confirm that this continues to be so. These requirements, which are accompanied by detailed operational guidance in the Quality Assurance Handbook, were scrutinised in their totality, in documentary study, and meetings with relevant staff and students, and the review team confirms both that they ensure alignment with the FHEQ and that they are fit for purpose.

1.2 Programme approval forms require a statement of learning outcomes for the target award, and detail of the available exit awards. Nevertheless, not all intermediate exit awards specify their own learning outcomes and can, therefore, be conferred on the basis of the downwardly adjusted learning outcomes of the target award. This does not meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), and the review team **recommends** that by June 2017 King's ensures that all intermediate awards have positively defined learning outcomes at the appropriate level.

1.3 Notwithstanding this recommendation, the mechanisms in place are explicit and applied consistently. The Expectation is therefore 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

1.4   The institution's Academic Regulations specify the volume and level of credit for each qualification: they are aligned with the FHEQ and reiterated in individual programme approval forms. They specify the threshold standard for credit and awards, and define how achievement, including in placement years and study abroad, is differentiated. These arrangements are clearly specified in the Quality Assurance Handbook.

1.5   The academic framework as a whole, which includes a procedure for suspending regulations and reporting annually on such suspensions, is specified in student handbooks and was familiar to the students who met the review team. The review team, having examined the academic framework and regulations in documentary study and meetings, found them clear and comprehensive.

1.6   The responsibility of the Academic Board, as the senior internal body for academic standards at King's, is articulated throughout and exercised in an active manner with the support of a clearly-defined structure of delegation.

1.7   The Expectation is therefore 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

1.8   Programme specifications, the definitive record of each taught programme, are articulated in programme approval forms, published on the institutional website and reviewed and, as appropriate, updated annually. Module specifications are published in an online portal. For research degrees, the definitive record is incorporated within the Academic Regulations: the necessary operational information is provided in the Core Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

1.9   These arrangements were examined by the review team in documentary study and meetings with staff and students: they demonstrate that King's maintains definitive records of programmes and their constituent modules, and this documentation is fit for purpose.

1.10   Programme and module approval forms are regularly reviewed, and ensure that accurate information is provided at the point of publication. Staff and students confirmed that handbooks, which incorporate links to programme and module specifications, are used as the definitive reference point for educational delivery. The documentation is accessible and consistently applied.

1.11   The Expectation is therefore 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

1.12   Proposals for new programmes, which originate in academic departments, are made on programme approval forms (see paragraph 1.2). Responsibility for consideration of the business case falls to the Programme Development and Approval Committee, chaired by the Vice-Principal (Education); detailed consideration of the academic case, both at discipline level and to ensure its alignment with all relevant external reference points, is undertaken by the proposing department's Faculty Education Committee. Such committees include student members where possible, and external peers (academics from other institutions appointed as full members of the committee): for programme approval external specialist expertise is co-opted. Successful proposals are signed off by the Programme Development and Approval Committee and submitted to the Academic Board for formal approval.

1.13   Broadly comparable procedures are in place to consider new and revised modules, where Faculty Education Committees have delegated powers to accept, reject, or require amendments. In the case of both programme and module approval, the review team confirms, from documentary study and discussion with staff and students, that the procedures are fit for purpose and appropriately used.

1.14   The structure and systems in place are clear, and engage appropriately with senior officers, deliberative committees, professional services and internal and external academic expertise. The Expectation is therefore 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

1.15   The College Assessment and Standards Committee has overarching responsibility for standards, quality assurance and assessment. The Assessment Regulations articulate expectations related to achievement of academic credit, calculation of final awards, progression, condonement and mitigating circumstances, and specify the rules for progression and transfer of credit. They are annually reviewed, and regular reports from assessment boards are received and monitored at institutional level.

1.16   As noted in paragraph 1.2, programme approval requires the articulation of programme and module learning outcomes aligned to all relevant external reference points. Guidance on the production of programme specifications confirms that credit and qualifications may be awarded only where assessment outcomes have been met. Implementation of this requirement falls to a three-tiered quality management structure at programme, faculty and institutional levels, and responsibilities at each level are clearly stated in the terms of reference of each committee. The exceptional case of interim exit awards is addressed in this report (see paragraph 1.2).

1.17   While operationally (see section B, paragraphs 2.27 and 2.34) the review team notes some inconsistencies in faculty-level engagement across the institution with respect to assessment, it is meeting the challenges associated with ensuring consistent policy implementation. The review team confirms that the necessary structures and procedures are in place to enable it to do so. Notwithstanding this point, which is an exemplification of the work in hand discussed elsewhere in this report (see paragraph 2.31 and elsewhere), the security of academic standards themselves is confirmed. The Expectation is therefore 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

1.18   Annual monitoring is based on a templated report involving the submission of all relevant internal and external quantitative and qualitative data. Reports are submitted to the appropriate faculty Vice-Dean, who then provides a summary for the Faculty Education Committee to enable it to identify common themes, issues for institutional consideration and areas of good practice. These are included in a consolidated report for the College Assessment and Standards Committee. The process can also lead to long-term projects by academic departments and professional services, though in a parallel procedure urgent issues are brought to the attention of the Vice-Principal (Education) for more immediate action. While the style and structure of the reports are variable both within and across faculties, the review team confirms, from studying a sample, that the essential ground is well covered, due process conscientiously followed, and detailed responses made to critical comment, including those contained in the National Student Survey.

1.19   Periodic programme review is currently sexennial, but a quinquennial process is being piloted (see paragraph 2.40). Both processes involve the submission of a detailed self-evaluation to panels which include faculty, extra-faculty, student and external representation, and, if appropriate, professional practitioners and/or professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) representatives. All external expectations are explicitly addressed in review panel reports, which are submitted, via faculty and institutional structures, to the College Assessment and Academic Standards Committee (periodic programme review) or to the Academic Board (quinquennial review).

1.20   Student membership of all panels is, though mandatory, not always achieved (see paragraph 2.37). Where student members have been identified, review panels brief them in advance of the formal meeting, normally through their chair. Although students who met the review team expressed some uncertainties about the processes, they also drew attention to the fact that they had on occasion had a positive influence on outcomes.

1.21   The review team scrutinised the implementation of annual monitoring and review and discussed the procedures involved with staff and student participants, finding them both appropriate and effective. The Expectation is therefore 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

1.22   Institutional policies on externality in setting and maintaining academic standards are specified in the Academic Regulations and explained in the Quality Assurance Handbook. External examiners are universally employed and have clear areas of responsibility. Programme approval requirements, which extend to collaborative provision, involve both external specialists and external peer members of Faculty Education Committees to ensure, among other things, that programmes are aligned with external benchmarks, and to sign off the final documentation. As noted at paragraph 1.12, where relevant, professional practitioners and/or PSRB representatives are involved.

1.23   As members of Faculty Education Committees, external peers are involved in approving programme modifications and in periodic programme review (see paragraph 1.12). Where they lack sufficient discipline expertise, further external specialist advice is sought, and professional practitioners and/or PSRB representatives may again be involved.

1.24   The review team both scrutinised and discussed these arrangements in design and operation, and confirms their fitness for purpose. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards: Summary of findings

1.25   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.26   King's is generally assiduous in ensuring the alignment of its procedures for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its awards with all relevant external requirements and expectations, including those of PSRBs. As an institution which devolves considerable operational duties to faculties, its centrally managed procedures are designed to ensure that these duties are discharged both responsibly and consistently: while faculties undertake their delegated duties responsibly, ensuring that they all do so consistently remains work in progress.

1.27   This part of the report contains one recommendation (reflecting the fact that students who take a certificate or diploma in lieu of a degree can do so without demonstrating that they have met any specified learning outcomes). All other arrangements are satisfactory, and King's is generally well placed to assure itself that the academic standards it sets for its credit and awards are secure, both for on-campus students and for those studying in a partner college. The review team concludes, on the basis of extensive documentary study and meetings with all relevant stakeholders, that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards **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 Institutional procedures for programme design, development and approval, which are designed to facilitate cross-faculty and inter-faculty initiatives, and for module approval, are fit for purpose. They are managed by the Quality and Academic Support Office, which makes use of an online system and documentation which explains both the process itself and the various templates involved. All associated procedures were scrutinised in the course of the review and are, as indicated in paragraphs 1.12 and 1.14, fit for purpose.

2.2 The Programme Development and Approval Committee (see paragraph 1.12) was established to provide an institution-wide mechanism to address identified weaknesses in previous arrangements. It undertakes annual review of the approval process, reporting to the Academic Board on changes it considers necessary. Its brief is strategic, involving consideration of the academic and business case for new and revised programmes in the context of institutional strategy, and its membership includes academic representatives and professional service managers. Identical procedures are in place for joint and collaborative programmes, and all proposed partnerships are subject to risk assessment and due diligence: these procedures are consistently undertaken (see also paragraph 2.49).

2.3 Students are involved through membership of their Faculty Education Committee. They were said to be only variably convinced of the purpose and value of the representation system and as not always attending meetings – those who met the review team, however, reported a number of positive experiences, and of making helpful contributions.

2.4 The Expectation is therefore 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

2.5 King's implements its commitment to attracting the best students in terms of ability and potential by means of a centralised and paperless admissions procedure. The Academic Regulations define general entry requirements for taught programmes; the Academic Board exercises institutional oversight, and a Marketing Recruitment and Admissions Group reporting to both the Academic Board and the Senior Executive Team aims to ensure that recruitment is aligned with institutional strategies and conducted in a timely, effective and coordinated way. A network of overseas offices supports international recruitment – staff, and agents are trained, participate in a biannual conference, and are subject to performance monitoring prior to contract renewal.

2.6 Policies and procedures on staff training, appeals, the recognition of prior learning, prior criminal convictions and the conduct of interviews are monitored by the heads of undergraduate and postgraduate admissions, who are supported by the Admissions Policy Manager. Policies and procedures are currently under review to ensure compliance with Competition and Markets Authority advice. Annual targets are set centrally (following discussion) with specific entry criteria set by academic departments. Information and guidance are provided for applicants declaring a disability, and review procedures are in place for applicants with a non-traditional profile.

2.7 The review team scrutinised all relevant policies and procedures by documentary study and meetings with relevant staff and students, some of whom were trained ambassadors. Policies and procedures are clear, and provide extensive preliminary information and communication.

2.8 The institution's Widening Participation Department works with some 10,000 learners annually to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Programmes include a two-year structured programme of events, activities and academic engagements with a contextualised admissions process and bespoke induction; an extended medical degree programme for students from disadvantaged backgrounds; and additional consideration and a variable offer for identified widening participation applicants. Information and activities are provided for successful applicants; negative recommendations for identified widening participation applicants are reviewed by the Director of Admissions and the Head of Widening Participation. The comprehensive approach to, and engagement of students and staff in, initiatives which widen access are **good practice**.

2.9 The Expectation is therefore met and the level of associated 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

2.10   The institution's Education Strategy is overseen by the College Education Committee, reporting to the Academic Board. The Strategy is currently under review, with the aim of developing coherent and collaborative policies and practices to enhance students' learning and support them throughout their period of study. Senior staff describe the current and planned approaches as both top down and bottom up, hence each faculty has a Vice-Dean (Education) both to lead faculty-level educational development and to drive the implementation of institutional strategy on behalf of the College Education Committee.

2.11   King's is committed to what the Principal describes as rebalancing the respective importance of teaching and learning (described internally as education) and research. This includes acknowledging excellence in education in promotions criteria; requiring research-led applications to demonstrate teaching achievement; recognising such excellence by honours and awards (King's Teaching Excellence Awards, led by student nominations, recognise excellent teaching); and establishing an Academy of Educators to enable 30 members of staff to share best teaching practice across the institution. The review team found evidence of this approach in meetings. Students, particularly but not only postgraduates, spoke largely enthusiastically about their experience of the institution's vibrant research community, valuing the influence of research on their learning. Capitalisation on its world-renowned strengths, which provides opportunities for students at all levels to participate in the research culture at King's, is **good practice**.

2.12   King's, acknowledging that National Student Survey results and the student submission comments on assessment and feedback fall below expectations, has identified this area as one to be addressed. It is taking steps, under the auspices of the College Education Committee and in partnership with the Students' Union, to achieve a significantly better outcome. Part of the response lies in personal tutoring, a universal system for taught students which, while at its best is of both academic and pastoral importance, is variably implemented, though generally valued by students. Mandatory training and an institution-wide senior tutor system are in place, and King's is aware both of the considerable potential of the system and of the need to improve its quality and consistency.

2.13   King's has invested heavily and imaginatively in learning space and resources. It engages with students in the Learning and Teaching Space Board, which advises on upgrading and refurbishing the physical and virtual teaching infrastructure, and its new Learning Centre has been designed to support widening participation and experimental teaching. Library facilities are available on all campuses; electronic journal availability is extensive; and students have access to University of London resources. Library opening hours have been extended in response to student comments, and students spoke well to the review team of this extension, of the quality of library provision, of the effectiveness of library staff's liaison with academic staff, of its responsiveness to consumer feedback, and of the helpfulness of its staff.

2.14   The institutional approach to information technology is based on accessibility: this includes a commitment to lecture capture, about which most students who met the review

team spoke positively while drawing attention to inconsistencies in provision. Each faculty has an appointed technology-enhanced learning lead, all of whom meet monthly in a forum to discuss operational issues and possible improvements. The Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning is charged with providing academic staff with the equipment and skills to use technology more effectively, while the King's Learning Institute (see paragraph 4.7) aims to enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the institution.

2.15 King's takes a sound, strategic and collaborative (with students) approach to developing and enhancing its provision of teaching and learning opportunities and the structures underpinning them. The Expectation is therefore 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

2.16   The Education Strategy is the foundation stone of academic planning, design, delivery, evaluation and enhancement. The arrangements for module and programme approval, monitoring and evaluation; admission and induction; and supporting and improving learning resources have been discussed elsewhere (see paragraphs 1.12, 1.18-1.19 and 2.13), and are soundly planned and competently delivered. The Strategy aims, among other things, to achieve a diverse and inclusive student population by widening participation and fair access followed by targeted support and challenge. For example, a project to monitor and improve the success rate of black and minority ethnic students paved the way for target-setting for faculties, attainment of which is now monitored annually.

2.17   The institution's support services aim to take an integrated approach to meeting students' physical, psychological, legal and financial needs. The Student Funding Office, which is responsible for disbursing hardship funds, liaises with the Student Advice Service, the Accommodation Services and the Finance Directorate to ensure that financial constraints do not unreasonably impede student progress. For international students, additional welfare officers have been recruited to support a potentially increased intake: their role includes advising on immigration-related matters and delivering a well-received orientation programme with academic, cultural and social focus. The English Language Centre's study skills support programmes are delivered across all campuses and are designed to help students fulfil their potential, improve their self-esteem and employability, and contribute significantly to international recruitment and supporting widening participation students.

2.18   As the focal point for the opportunities provided across different services and departments, the Student Opportunities and Skills Committee exercises strategic oversight of the institutional approach to helping students develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The cocurricular prospectus, for example, makes an extensive array of schemes available: students who met the review team spoke positively of the opportunities they offer to enhance their life skills and employability.

2.19   These opportunities include volunteering, part-time work, study abroad, foreign language learning and assuming offices of responsibility in student societies. The King's Talent Bank offers on-campus temporary work assignments; the Student Entrepreneurship Institute supports multi-disciplinary student start-ups; alumni mentoring is often available; the King's Internships Programme offers internships (mainly paid and cocurricular, though mainly postgraduate credit-bearing internships are also available); and the King's Experience offers awards to encourage cocurricular activities and community service, and undergraduate research fellowships to provide an opportunity for working alongside academic staff in the summer vacation.

2.20   The inclusive and imaginative approach taken by King's enables students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, and its monitoring and evaluation procedures ensure their continual improvement. Its provision of a range of cocurricular and other opportunities contributing to students' life skills and employability, which are strategically planned, widely available and well-regarded, is **good practice**. The Expectation is therefore 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

2.21   The aim of the Education Strategy that students will be actively involved in the enhancement of their education is reflected in the Student Voice Strategy, developed jointly with the Students' Union. While the review team noted, both from the student submission and from meetings with students, some inconsistency in the implementation of the latter strategy, it noted also current plans to increase the consistency with which engagement takes place. In particular, the Student Voice Forum has paused its deliberations pending the outcome of a joint College/Students' Union project, and responsibility for student engagement now rests with the Student Experience Committee. The review team confirms that the mechanisms to ensure effective student representation are fit for purpose.

2.22   Students are represented on all committees and other bodies pertinent to this review, and representative arrangements for postgraduate research students have recently been strengthened. The Students' Union provides a structured training programme supported by a representative handbook, regular meetings take place between senior managers and Students' Union officers, and students contribute to programme approval and review. The representation system allows for some variation across faculties, but staff/student liaison committees are universally in place, their minutes suggest they operate effectively, and the establishment, from the current academic year, of student-chaired faculty forums has led to greater staff and student engagement. Students confirmed to the review team that ample opportunities exist for their views to be heard.

2.23   Partnership-oriented enhancement opportunities range from an internship scheme to research activities on aspects of the student experience, and from support programmes for disabled students to widening participation initiatives. Many of these have been considered by such senior bodies as the Academic Board, the College Education Committee and the senior management team.

2.24   The results of external surveys are analysed at institutional level, and action plans, produced in consultation with students, are overseen by the Vice-Principal (Education).and reported through staff/student liaison committees. The review team found evidence of enhancements to student engagement deriving from external surveys. Within King's, students are invited to complete student and module surveys, the results of which are provided to department heads, executive deans and staff/student liaison committees for action as appropriate.

2.25   The Expectation is therefore 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

2.26   As noted in paragraph 1.15, responsibility for assessment rests with the College Assessment and Standards Committee. Policies, which are comprehensive in scope, are detailed in the Assessment Regulations, disseminated in the Quality Assurance Handbook, and regularly reviewed.

2.27   The institutional marking criteria for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes specify the generic expectations of student performance. Following agreement that these criteria present translation difficulties in a discipline-specific context, faculties were required to map discipline-specific marking criteria on to them: this was completed at the start of the present academic year. Nevertheless, the implementation of such criteria has thus far been variable, with some faculties responding actively and sometimes creatively, but others retaining the institutional framework.

2.28   A range of staff development opportunities in assessment and feedback is available. For new lecturers, passing probation is dependent on successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice: compliance with this requirement is delegated to local end-of-probation review panels and not centrally monitored. Hourly-paid teaching staff make varied contributions to teaching and assessment – their induction, monitoring and support are local responsibilities and the contributions of many are regarded as distinctive and valuable. Nevertheless, one area identified a continuing challenge in ensuring that they consistently provide appropriate assessment and feedback. When this issue was explored in a meeting the review team was told that poor quality visiting lecturers might not be invited to return.

2.29   Graduate teaching assistants also contribute to teaching and assessment. They attend a mandatory prior training day and receive continuing support from the King's Learning Institute in discipline-specific workshops. Nevertheless, the institution recognises the challenges associated with ensuring institution-wide parity of experience, and is aware that this has been raised by some undergraduates who have been taught by research students. Its response is to develop a cross-institutional collaboration to strengthen the training provided.

2.30   King's identifies assessment practice, including feedback to students, as a challenge, and students who met the review team reported mixed practices both within and across programmes. The institution is aware that poor student satisfaction scores in relation to assessment and feedback in some disciplines is indicative of variable local implementation of institutional policy; the same conclusion emerges from audits of student information about assessment in handbooks and of compliance with the four-week requirement for the return of assessment feedback.

2.31   Measures implemented to raise the status of assessment and feedback include declaring academic year 2015-16 the Year of Assessment and Feedback; ensuring, by drafting a revised policy, that assessment and feedback are prioritised in the next Education Strategy; supporting the King's Learning Institute's Assessment and Feedback Project;

providing students with access to examination scripts; and actively monitoring student handbooks. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to address inconsistencies in assessment and feedback.

2.32   While noting the affirmation associated with current endeavours to ensure consistent implementation of policy and regulation in a large and complex institution, the review team confirms that current arrangements are, overall, equitable, valid and reliable. The Expectation is therefore 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

2.33   External examiner policies are, as noted above (see paragraph 1.22), specified in the Academic Regulations, included in the Quality Assurance Handbook and aligned with all relevant external expectations. Nomination, appointment, support, induction, responsibilities and extension of tenure policies are in place, and external examiners are members of all assessment boards and sub-boards.

2.34   External examiner reports and information about external examiners and assessment boards are readily available, though awareness of, and interest in, them were limited among students who met the review team. Formal responses to reports are mandatory and may, where necessary, be supplemented at institutional level. Faculty assessment boards are required to identify key themes in external examiner reports, though scrutiny of a sample of minutes suggests that some variability in implementation may exist. External examiners express general satisfaction with the arrangements, though some note that they are not always asked to pre-approve assessments. Later reference is also made to the possible need for their oversight of joint and dual awards to be strengthened (see paragraph 2.50). College external examiner scrutiny panels receive a list of critical issues raised by external examiners, and meet annually to note and report (via the College Assessment and Standards Committee to the Academic Board) both good practice and areas of concern.

2.35   Responsibility for overseeing the external examining of research degrees rests with the Research Degrees Examination Board. This Board exercises its responsibility for appointments through subject area boards, and receives annual summary information on nominations received and approved. Its Chair receives examination reports, which are then disseminated and summarised in faculty annual postgraduate research reports.

2.36   King's has clear and appropriate policies concerning all aspects of external examining. Therefore 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

2.37   Programme monitoring and review are as described above (see paragraphs 1.19 and 1.21) and encompass all programmes of study, including dual and joint awards, where the system has recently been supplemented by requiring explicit confirmation that the expectations of the FHEQ are met. Although the requirement for student membership of panels has not always been met, this challenge is being addressed, and the fitness for purpose of current arrangements is confirmed.

2.38   Annual monitoring considers programme performance on the basis of extensive internal and external evidence designed to ensure both weaknesses and good practice are identified, and beneficial changes implemented. Reviews are considered by Faculty Education Committees, following which a report is submitted to the Quality and Academic Support Office: this in turn contributes to an institution-wide summary report for the College Assessment and Standards Committee, from which identified matters of concern are extracted and brought to the attention of the Vice-Principal (Education).

2.39   Periodic review is the responsibility of the College Assessment and Standards Committee, reporting via the College Education Committee to the Academic Board. The review team noted that irregularities in the conduct of one review panel had been effectively identified and corrected by this procedure. Responsibility for detailed work is devolved to Faculty Education Committees: the team confirms that these committees are vigilant in the exercise of their responsibilities.

2.40   The proposed quinquennial review system (see paragraph 1.19) will operate at departmental level, and take account of teaching and learning, research, external activities, and resources, some of which have previously been subject to less detailed scrutiny given the weight of statistical and qualitative data which were included.

2.41   The Expectation is therefore 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

2.42   Procedures for considering academic appeals and complaints are governed by the Academic Regulations. Separate procedures are in place for allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination; arrangements for academic appeals by research students are set out in the Core Code of Practice for Research Degrees; for collaborative partners they are defined in memoranda of agreement. The Students' Union provides impartial advice for potential appellants and complainants, and all staff and student members of appeal and complaints committees are mandatorily trained.

2.43   The Student Conduct and Appeals Office oversees and analyses all cases, making recommendations for enhancement. It ensures compliance and engagement with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and provides information and best practice advice to individuals, departments, faculties and relevant Students' Union officers. These arrangements, which the review team scrutinised by documentary study and in meetings with staff and students, are robust, accessible and fit for purpose.

2.44   With the support of the Students' Union, King's responded to the OIA's Good Practice Framework by reducing the number of formal stages of its student complaints procedure from three to two: a single investigation and a review stage. King's has made efforts to communicate these procedures to students, though awareness of them was variable among those who met the review team, a minority of whom viewed the prospect of complaining with some trepidation, stressing, however, that this was based on lack of knowledge, and not experience.

2.45   The Students' Union has encouraged King's to facilitate appropriate local-level complaint resolution: in fact such opportunities currently exist, but are recorded only in staff/student liaison committee minutes. The institution may find it helpful to consider whether scope exists for systematising both the execution and the communication of these arrangements.

2.46   The Expectation is therefore 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

2.47   With the exception of a longstanding validation arrangement with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London-based partnerships are mission-critical clinical placements in partnership with NHS trusts. Institution-wide quality assurance procedures are in place, with responsibility for implementation lying with faculty-level placement managers.

2.48   King's maintains a comprehensive list of collaborative partners by category, and the responsibilities of each partner for information provision are articulated in the formal agreement. While institutional engagement in international collaborative activity remains modest in proportion to total provision, working with others is critical to strategy, which envisages a portfolio of long-term mutually-beneficial partnerships to facilitate research, varied forms of international engagement, and student and staff mobility. The approach to opening further study abroad opportunities includes full-year exchanges, electives, summer schools and field trips: these are monitored and reviewed by study abroad tutors and supported by the Study Abroad Office.

2.49   International collaborations are subject to the same quality management arrangements as on-campus provision, augmented to reflect the additional risks and challenges involved, including those deriving from the partnership itself. For example, a review-of-activity procedure takes place prior to contract renewal, involving a review of risk assessment and due diligence. These procedures have recently been buttressed by the establishment of a Collaborative Provision Advisory Group and an International Committee with responsibility for strategic oversight; ethical and risk assessment and due diligence enquiries for possible new arrangements; and approving and monitoring study abroad provision.

2.50   External examiners oversee joint and dual programmes through their attendance at assessment sub-boards (where progression and awards are confirmed) and through the opportunity to make a templated comment on elements of awards delivered by partner colleges (for example mark translation). Since, however, in the templates studied by the review team this opportunity was not always taken (see paragraph 2.34), scope exists for the role of external examiners in overseeing joint and dual awards to be strengthened.

2.51   The strategy of developing a collaborative portfolio has recently involved strengthening the Quality Assurance team and International Office, establishing the International Committee and Collaborative Provision Advisory Group, revising due diligence and assessment of risk frameworks, and introducing an overview report on collaborative matters within annual monitoring. While the review team confirms that the mechanisms now in place provide a proportionate and potentially sound response to the present and planned growth of international collaborations, the fact that few examples of the operation of these procedures and mechanisms exist makes it premature to evaluate their effectiveness. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to strengthen quality assurance mechanisms for international collaborative partnerships.

2.52   On the basis of extensive documentary study and discussions with institutional managers, academic staff and students, the review team confirms, notwithstanding the

newness of some structures, that the institutional approach is strategic in orientation, proportionate to the risks and challenges involved, and professionally and responsibly implemented. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

2.53   King's is a world-renowned research institution and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities. It offers its 2,000 research students a flourishing intellectual environment, with extensive learning resources and the support of a Graduate School. The Graduate School's responsibilities include overseeing the programmes delivered through seven doctoral training partnerships or centres; managing conference attendance and hardship funds; hosting two Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellows who provide advice on thesis preparation; and offering research seminars and other events. Its Researcher Development Unit, which delivers the Researcher Development Programme, includes a seconded Careers Advisor.

2.54   The College Education Committee delegates responsibility for strategy and policy to its Postgraduate Research Student Subcommittee, chaired by the Director of the Graduate School and composed of faculty heads of graduate studies. Academic standards are outlined in documents readily available on the Governance Zone, a central repository for documentation. For research students the main dedicated documents are the Handbook for Supervisors and the Postgraduate Research Core Code of Practice, which contains relevant institutional policies and procedures, and specifies the responsibilities of all stakeholders.

2.55   Selection procedures are designed to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted, though the institutional commitment to widening participation extends to research students, for whom the number of available scholarships has been increased. Students, who register initially for MPhil, attend a mandatory induction course delivered biannually to meet the demands associated with two or three entry points.

2.56   Supervision is by carefully selected teams, with a main supervisor the leading contact point: the high level of student satisfaction with supervisory arrangements is clear from survey evidence (in the 2015 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 91.7 per cent of respondents believed their supervisor had the necessary skills and knowledge to support their research) and from students who met the review team. Progress monitoring is a faculty responsibility, with the steps specified in the Core Code of Practice for Research Degrees. Examiners are appointed by the Research Degrees Examination Board: the Board's independence of both faculties and the Graduate School is designed to ensure the separation of the examining function from supervisory and other working relationships, be they in the faculty or the Graduate School.

2.57   Research students at King's read for their degree in a secure and supportive academic environment. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.58   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.59   This judgement area contains three features of good practice – widening access, the involvement of all students in a strong research culture, and the strategic approach taken to co-curricular activities, and two affirmations – of progress being made in respect of assessment and feedback, and of quality assurance in international collaborative partnerships.

2.60   The procedures meet all external expectations, and while they are for the most part implemented consistently, King's is aware that not all variability of practice across and within faculties is a necessary consequence of disciplinary differences. Work is still required, for example, to achieve consistency in the quality of personal tutoring and in the achievement of institution-wide good assessment and feedback practice. Nevertheless, none of the variations noted in the course of the review constitutes a threat to the quality of student learning opportunities, and all 11 Expectations in this section are met with a low level of risk.

2.61   Three strong themes to emerge from this section of the report are the strong institutional commitment to achieving an inclusive and diverse student population; the richness of the research environment, which King's opens to all students irrespective of seniority; and the imaginative and partnership-based approach to creating opportunities for students to participate in paid and voluntary activities. The clear strategic aim behind this latter activity is to help students fulfil their potential, academically, personally and in terms of employability. The evidence is that these opportunities are greatly valued.

2.62   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities **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   King's makes available, online and in a range of documents, detailed information covering strategy, values, organisation, governance, finance, and committee membership. Procedures are in place to ensure that its approach to published information meets all legal obligations as well as policy requirements and expectations. For example, King's is currently working to ensure that all information is compliant with Competition and Markets Authority guidance, and, in respect of hidden costs of study in particular, that it addresses student expectations of transparency and comprehensiveness. The key information set is available online with a link to the UNISTATS site, and the institutional approach to collecting the relevant data was beneficially audited two years ago. Programmes are not advertised until fully approved, and the accuracy and currency of published information are subject to regular review.

3.2   The Student Charter, produced in partnership with the Students' Union and currently under review, sets out student and staff rights and responsibilities. Definitive information about taught programmes and modules features in programme approval forms and online; in the case of research degrees it appears in the Academic Regulations and the Core Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

3.3   Responsibilities for advertising material in partnership provision are clearly stipulated in the memoranda of agreement. King's, which is aware of the complexity of ensuring the proper exercise of these responsibilities, an activity currently supplemented by spot-checks by officers, may find it helpful to review whether its current approach would meet the demands of potentially larger and more complex partnerships in the future. The review team confirms, from documentary study and discussions with staff and students, the fitness for purpose of arrangements for the management and provision of information.

3.4   Information for applicants and those who have accepted offers includes applicant days, offer holder events, virtual fairs, newsletters and web pages. Prospectuses, which contain information about admissions, entry requirements, selection procedures, fees and accommodation, have been improved in the light of student and prospective student surveys. Additional sources of information are provided for international applicants, those from widening participation backgrounds and those with disabilities, with some campus events streamed live for those unable to attend. While a minority of students who met the review team were critical of errors and delays in information provided in advance of registration, most described it as accurate and helpful. .

3.5   On arrival and subsequently, students receive extensive information, beginning with an induction programme providing advice and guidance in accessible format, and information from departments and faculties relevant to their responsibilities. Student handbooks are required to follow institutional protocols, and, while the desired level of consistency has yet to be achieved, evidence exists of the overall effectiveness of procedures in place to monitor their accuracy and completeness. Graduating students receive appropriate records and an academic transcript. The review team found the

information provided to staff responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards to be comprehensive and likely to aid them in the discharge of their duties; staff who met the review team both confirmed and demonstrated that this was so.

3.6   The institutional approach to the provision of information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The Expectation is therefore 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

3.7   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.8   King's operates robust procedures for ensuring that the information it publishes at both institutional and faculty level is accurate and trustworthy, and also that it is compliant with legal obligations and policy requirements. This finding includes online information for the public, for applicants and those who have accepted offers, and for current students, whether produced online or as hard copy. Most students who met the review team spoke positively of it.

3.9   The information provided to all categories of staff is comprehensive and likely to aid them in the discharge of their duties – staff who met the review team both confirmed and demonstrated that this was so. The information provided by King's is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy, and therefore **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 Education Strategy, which is currently being evaluated and updated, makes reference to integrating current and planned initiatives and projects, including attempts to address the variability of satisfaction scores manifest in the National Student Survey and internal data sources. The review team had access to a summary of progress, and confirms that appropriate resource has been committed to this endeavour.

4.2   Senior managers acknowledge that King's is on a journey towards ensuring consistent local implementation of institutionally-agreed policies and expectations. As noted in paragraph 2.30, some difficulty continues to be encountered in ensuring that all student handbooks contain required assessment information and that feedback on assessment is returned within the stipulated four-week period. The review team accepts that progress has been made, and that institutional leadership is committed to ensuring that academic staff implement institutional initiatives such that all students receive an educational experience of consistently and reliably high quality.

4.3   Activities under way to improve student learning opportunities include strengthening personal tutoring by providing resources to ensure that the task can be undertaken effectively, extending lecture capture, and developing cocurricular opportunities to support employability. Students who met the review team spoke positively about these developments, valuing both discipline-level and employability-related opportunities.

4.4   In presenting evidence of enhancement, King's draws attention to activities designed to improve the flexibility and accessibility of the learning environment, including investments in the King's e-Learning and Teaching Service and the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning. King's facilitates and rewards teaching excellence by supporting an Annual Excellence in Teaching Conference, publishing the Higher Education Research Network Journal, delivering the King's Teaching Excellence Awards, and creating a teaching-led pathway to promotion.

4.5   Employability is a significant enhancement theme. The Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability envisages three strands: embedded within programmes; centrally provided services; and student-led activity. Implementation is led by the Vice-Principal (Education) and the Head of Careers and Employability, and overseen by the Student Opportunities and Skills Committee. Future priorities include focusing on the aspirations of international students and encouraging students to reflect on employability from the first. In furtherance of this, King's has recently launched a Careers Enrolment Survey to gather information on career readiness at registration to target students who may benefit from further support.

4.6   The institutional aim is to ensure connectivity between centrally-provided services and local provision, and to increase accountability for local delivery. The Careers and Employability Service makes significant contributions to the Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability. It provides a student-facing service accredited against the matrix Standard for advice and support; it supports departmental-level plans to implement the Strategy; and its employability audit tool aims to support the review of provision within programmes with a view to securing greater consistency. In similar vein, King's has (at departmental level)

designated selected academic staff careers and employability liaisons and (at faculty level) appointed senior staff to lead implementation.

4.7 The King's Learning Institute supports and facilitates the Institution-wide development of academic practice. Its current approach is embedded in the bottom-up Changing Classrooms initiative, whereby faculties, normally through Vice-Deans (Education), identify a need and work collaboratively with Institute staff to meet it. Projects spawned by this initiative include the publication of 'quick guides', bespoke staff training, research groups/networks and discipline-based conferences.

4.8 Enhancements to postgraduate students' experience include the Postgraduate Code of Practice, a scholarship scheme to widen access, and the postgraduate higher education achievement report. Student-led enhancements include a Student Entrepreneurship Institute, a Student Opportunity Fund, an Undergraduate Research Fellowship scheme and the King's Inclusive Education Project, designed to raise awareness and implement inclusive learning, teaching and assessment.

4.9 The extent to which annual monitoring and programme review identify and trigger enhancement opportunities is limited by the sometimes lengthy gap between the submission of annual programme reports and the formal consideration of summary faculty and institutional reports by the College Assessment and Standards Committee. For example, the consideration of summary reports for academic year 2013-14 took place in September 2015. While it is true that by that time many actions were already in train, this time lag is not conducive to the systematic and timely institutional-level capture of enhancement opportunities. King's is aware of this, and has begun to address it by enabling programme teams to access student data earlier.

4.10 King's takes deliberate steps to improve the quality of student learning opportunities and a commitment to doing so is evident across the Institution. While scope exists for aspects of it to be done in a more systematic and timely way, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.11   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.12   King's takes deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities, not least by an increasingly systematic approach to increasing students' employability. Meeting the challenges associated with ensuring that all academic staff implement institutional initiatives to ensure that all students receive an educational experience of consistently and reliably high quality, however, remains work in progress. Accordingly scope continues to exist for some enhancement activities to be undertaken in a more systematic and timely way.

4.13   King's has committed substantial resources to supporting imaginative approaches to teaching and learning, to strengthening the educational environment, to supporting employability, to encouraging and supporting students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds, and to facilitating and rewarding teaching excellence. These resources have frequently been put to creative and innovative use. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

5   Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   The institutional understanding of employability involves the development of skills, understanding and attributes which enable students to manage, develop and be successful in their chosen careers. The approach to supporting the development of such skills, which is both strategic and practical, is explicit and clearly articulated by King's. As noted in section B (see, for example, paragraphs 2.17-2.20), employability is a significant enhancement theme, and leveraging a location in central London to benefit employability is an important strategic aim. King's has a demonstrable capacity to build local partnerships providing opportunities for students, for example through the King's Cultural Institute and the Science Gallery, and its track record in achieving this is considerable.

5.2   The Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability, led by the Vice-Principal (Education) and the Head of Careers and Employability, provides a framework for ensuring that career development is integral to students' educational experience. It is overseen by the Student Opportunities and Skills Committee, which includes both academic and professional services members as well as officers of the Students' Union, and supports, strategically as well as financially, projects relating not only to employability but also to widening participation, student mobility and personal tutoring.

5.3   The Careers and Employability Service works closely with academic departments to develop annual employability plans and deliver programmes of career learning (see paragraph 4.6). The most recent Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education data show 94.8 per cent of UK graduates as being in graduate-level employment or further study after six months, and the Careers and Employability Service is increasingly targeting the minority of students identified as being at risk of not so being.

5.4   King's and the Students' Union, individually or in partnership, offer extensive co-curricular opportunities for students to develop skills and experience (see paragraphs 2.18-2.20) as well as the targeted employment advice and support described in this report. These opportunities are available also to the research student community, the members of which receive informal careers advice from supervisors and mentors as well as the professional services of a dedicated careers adviser within the Graduate School. Skills and employability training for research students is coordinated by the Researcher Development Unit, which delivers an annual development programme mapped against the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers.

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 30 to 33 of the Higher Education Review handbook.

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

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.

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.

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

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.

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.