



# Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Le Cordon Bleu Limited

September 2017

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Le Cordon Bleu Limited. The review took place from 25 to 27 September 2017 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor John Baldock
- Mrs Mandy Hobart
- Ms Sophie Elliot (student reviewer).

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

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

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

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

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

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code).

<sup>2</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education).

## Key findings

### Judgements

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of the awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the provider's 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**.

- The resourcing and management of a learning environment that provides students with access to modern, state of the art, kitchen and demonstration facilities (Expectation B3).
- The comprehensive and informative virtual learning environment that enables students to access feedback on assessments remotely (Expectation B6).
- The online icon system for identifying individual students' additional support needs and a system of fair assessment (Expectation B6).
- The comprehensive system of termly and annual reviews accompanied by effective action plans which record progress (Expectation B8).
- Demonstrations by leading practitioners as part of the learning programme which extends students' knowledge (Enhancement).

### Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations**.

By April 2018:

- develop an explicit strategy to inform and guide the deployment of resources allocated to staff development (Expectation B3)
- review library opening hours to enable greater access for students (Expectation B4).

## About the provider

Le Cordon Bleu was founded in Paris in 1895 and is currently a network of culinary and hospitality Institutes in 35 institutes located in 20 countries, with some 20,000 students worldwide. The London Institute was established independently in 1931, formally becoming part of the wider group in 1990, and relocating to the current premises at 15 Bloomsbury Square, London in January 2012. The premises include professional modern kitchens and classroom facilities. Internationally, the group provides higher education programmes in the culinary arts, restaurant management, food and wine entrepreneurship degrees, and a master's in Business Administration, and more recently a master's in Gastronomy. The London Institute delivers vocational higher education programmes at level 4.

Le Cordon Bleu Diploma consists of three levels: Basic, Intermediate (both level 3) and Superior (level 4), and may be taken in Cuisine or Pâtisserie specialisms. The courses may be purchased as single 'integrated programmes' or 'à la carte' (enrolled stage by stage). Levels studied 'à la carte' do not have to be taken in consecutive terms.

Students who are successful in achieving all three levels in a given specialism are awarded the Diplôme de Cuisine or the Diplôme de Pâtisserie. Both specialisms in any given level may be studied concurrently. If both diplomas are achieved, the student is awarded the Grand Diplôme.

The level 4 courses within the scope of Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) at the time of the review visit were:

- Superior Cuisine (three months)
- Superior Pâtisserie (three months)
- Diploma in Culinary Management (three months)
- Diploma in Wine, Gastronomy and Management (six months)
- Diploma in Gastronomy, Nutrition and Food Trends (three months).

These are accredited under a licence from the awarding organisation, NCFE.

The Institute's level 4 FTE numbers for the last four academic years are:

- 2013-14 - 154
- 2014-15 - 211
- 2015-16 - 201
- 2016-17 - 211

In addition, from September 2018 the institute will deliver jointly with Birkbeck, University of London a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Culinary Industry Management.

The current key challenges identified by the Institute are:

- maximising potential resources and future growth within the current facilities
- developing more classroom-based courses
- the introduction of an integrated internship programme to allow students to experience real-world environments following their studies.

## Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Findings**

1.1 The Institute's Quality Manual prescribes the principles and procedures applied to ensure that the standards of its awards are set and maintained in accordance with national qualifications and credit frameworks and that the curricula are informed by relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The Quality Manual is updated annually, or within year if necessary, to ensure that the management of standards is consistent with the Quality Code.

The content and assessment of the Institute's programmes are designed taking account of the National Occupational Standards for vocational qualifications. These policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.2 The team reviewed programme documentation including programme specifications, the programme development and approval procedures as set out in the Quality Handbook, and relevant minutes of Academic Board and the Teaching and Learning Committee. Meetings were held with staff responsible for managing the standards of awards.

1.3 Le Cordon Bleu designs its own programmes which are accredited through an Investing in Quality (IIQ) licence from NCFE, a national qualifications awarding organisation. Under the terms of the IIQ licence, the learning outcomes of all accredited courses are mapped by the Institute against the National Occupational Standards and are benchmarked using level descriptors of Ofqual's Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). The programmes are reviewed against NCFE's seven Quality Statements during its bi-annual quality visits. The Institute's level 4 programmes also take account of relevant parts of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Events, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism. The meetings with staff responsible for the design and delivery of level 4 programmes confirmed that they understand and apply relevant national standards and guidelines.

1.4 The Institute has set up an Industry Reference Group, consisting of senior practitioners and managers in the food industry, which meets annually to advise on how its programmes can teach up-to-date methods and remain relevant to the sector.

1.5 From September 2018 the Institute will deliver the culinary skills elements of a joint degree in Business Administration in Culinary Industry Management with Birkbeck, University of London, leading to a University of London award. The Institute will be responsible for maintaining quality processes and academic standards set by Birkbeck.

1.6 The review team considers that threshold standards are appropriately secured. The Expectation is met and the 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**

1.7 The Quality Manual sets out the academic governance structure including the terms of reference of the boards and committees responsible for the management of academic standards. The Institute's programmes are benchmarked against UK National Occupational Standards (NOS) and are accredited through an Investing in Quality (IIQ) licence from NCFE. The level 4 awards made by the Institute are supported by programme specifications that set out measurable learning outcomes mapped against the level descriptors of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The Institute's management of standards is also regularly reviewed against NCFE's seven Quality Statements at their twice-yearly quality visits. The Expectation would be met.

1.8 The team reviewed programme documentation including the Quality Manual, programme specifications, and relevant minutes of Academic Board and the Teaching and Learning Committee. Meetings were held with staff responsible for managing the standards of awards.

1.9 Oversight and responsibility for academic standards and governance rests with the Academic Board chaired by the Culinary Arts Director, who is also a member of the Institute's executive management: the Leadership Team (StratCom). Day-to-day academic management is the responsibility of the Academic Director, who reports to the Culinary Arts Director and chairs the Teaching and Learning Committee and Examination Boards. Heads of programmes and chef/lecturers report to the Academic Director on academic and teaching matters, and also report matters involving facilities and equipment to the Culinary Arts Director.

1.10 The Institute does not operate a single set of academic regulations governing the teaching and assessment of students. While most quality procedures are set out in the Quality Manual, and most academic policies are prescribed in the Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures, further guidance on academic standards and practices is found in a range of documents including marking forms, assessment guides and course manuals. The Institute also has access to the governance resources and advice provided by the Global Support Unit of the international Le Cordon Bleu Group.

1.11 Programme specifications set out the learning outcomes for programmes and outline the teaching and learning activities and assessment methods. The Quality Manual contains the Institute's Learning and Teaching Policy and the Assessment Policy, together with regulations covering admissions, programme development and approval. A more detailed assessment procedure for each course is set out in each of the course manuals. The Student Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual also contains guidance on assessment and rules and procedures for academic discipline and appeals. Information about assessment is provided for students in the Summative Examination Procedures Handbooks for each course. The dispersed nature of information about academic procedures and assessment reflects the variety of skills and learning objectives across the Institute's vocational courses. Students and staff met by the review team indicated that they had clear understandings of the academic frameworks and regulations governing the award of credit and qualifications.

1.12 The Expectation is met and the 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**

1.13 The Institute has full responsibility for producing and maintaining definitive information about their programmes and ensuring that academic standards and quality procedures adhere to their partnership agreement with NCFE.

1.14 The definitive record for each programme is the programme specification, which provides key information about how the Institute aligns assessments with the FHEQ. Learning outcomes are mapped to the Subject Benchmark Statement for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism. The programme specifications are compliant with the academic frameworks and regulations of the Quality Code.

1.15 The programme specifications provide a record of the structure and content of each qualification devised by the Institute and approved by the Academic Board. Internal quality procedures stipulate that teaching staff, in collaboration with Heads of Departments and the Academic Director, take account of academic frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements when designing assessments and developing new programmes. Programme development is also informed by input from industry experts, feedback from external examiners and students.

1.16 The Examination Board, which is a subcommittee of the Academic Board, takes note of the comments of the external examiner when developing assessments within existing programmes. This ensures that assessments are consistent with learning outcomes.

1.17 Tutors at the Institute use programme specifications as a reference point when planning and delivering lessons, and students have access to comprehensive Course Manuals which provide clear information regarding their assessments.

1.18 The review team found that the Institute has thorough systems, policies and procedures in place to ensure the maintenance of definitive records for all programmes and that these provide a reference point for programme delivery and assessment. To test the effectiveness of these processes, the team examined policy documents and information accessible to staff and students, met with staff involved in programme development and maintenance, and also met with students.

1.19 The review team concluded that the Expectation is met and the 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**

1.20 The Institute has no accreditation or degree awarding powers, and all programmes offered at higher education level are approved by NCFE. Since 2010, Le Cordon Bleu has been accrediting its programmes under an NCFE Investing in Quality licence (IIQ), and programmes are non-regulated. The awarding organisation is responsible for ensuring that academic standards are maintained at the appropriate level as part of the accreditation and monitoring process.

1.21 Clear programme development and approval mechanisms are set out in the Quality Handbook and in the remits of the Academic Board and the Teaching and Learning Committee. Suggestions for new programme developments can be identified by any member of the Institute's staff based on identified progression needs, or enhancement of existing provision. Proposals for new qualifications are required to demonstrate clear links to business objectives, a complementary relationship to existing programmes, forecasts of potential demand, what sector requirements or demands are being met, timescales for development and estimated costs.

1.22 Where suggestions are deemed viable, and approved for development by Academic Board, the Teaching and Learning Committee has oversight of the development process. External experts from the sector are consulted as part of the programme development process to ensure that content meets professional bodies and industry requirements, and the external examiner is consulted to assure that assessment strategies are appropriate and cover the key learning outcomes. Student input is also sought to inform programme delivery and assessment demands and strategies. The awarding organisation is also notified of the new development.

1.23 New programme specifications include information related to study modes, subject weightings, content, assessment strategies and links to employability. New programme details are submitted to Academic Board and then to Le Cordon Bleu International for final approval prior to implementation. Post approval by LCB London and LCB International, details are sent to NCFE for consideration and accreditation along with evidence of how external criteria are met. Programmes are aligned to the relevant National Occupational Standards as part of programme development, review and accreditation to support the practice-based elements of provision.

1.24 The team reviewed a range of programme documentation including programme specifications, the development and approval procedures, as set out in the Quality Handbook, and minutes of Academic Board and Teaching and Learning Committee meetings which record programme approval and amend reviews and decisions.

1.25 Meetings were also held with senior management representatives, Heads of Programme, lecturers and students to confirm their engagement in the programme development and approval process.

1.26 Clear evidence of programme approval mechanisms was identified which ensures the relevance of content, and standards alignment to external professional standards including National Occupational Standards. Externality is evidence through consultation with the external examiner on assessment, and with the awarding organisation to ensure accreditation criteria are met and monitored.

1.27 The team concluded that the robust systems ensure that the Expectation is met and the 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**

1.28 The Institute is responsible for ensuring that the design of programmes and qualifications includes clear assessment strategies, and these are verified by the awarding organisation as part of the accreditation process. As part of the programme development and accreditation process, assessment strategies are set out and approved by the external examiner. Assessments are designed to ensure that students have opportunities to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes to the required standards, and the process is managed by the internal assessors and internal quality assurers and monitored by the external examiner, and as part of the NCFE accreditation and standards monitoring process.

1.29 Learning outcomes and assessment criteria are clearly set out in the individual programme specifications and in the Programme Manuals provided to students, as well as in the programme-specific assessment guides. Termly exam boards review reports from individual programmes and student achievement data, along with comments from the external examiner as to the standards and the management of assessment and outcomes. Feedback from student surveys is also considered, and all reports record broad satisfaction with the clarity, relevance and accessibility of assessment requirements, which are also checked by the external examiner, who visits four times a year.

1.30 Procedures and policies are in place to support students with disabilities or learning difficulties to achieve and progress. Reasonable adjustment processes are set out in the Quality Manual, and staff report to the Teaching and Learning Committee on adjustments made, including for mobility access and allergy restrictions. Decisions and any appeals are heard by Examination Boards and final decisions ratified by Academic Board. Students recognise that there are limitations to what can be accommodated within industry-related commercial kitchens.

1.31 Programmes are aligned to relevant National Occupational Standards as part of the programme development, review and accreditation process. Assessment is managed and monitored by the Institute through the defined internal assessor role and the internal quality assurance role, as well as through monitoring visits by the awarding organisation as part of the NCFE Investing in Quality system. Feedback and assurance of the relevance of assessment is further supported through the use of external assessors who are industry practitioners, and their views inform the assessment process, and provide feedback to the assessors on student work. The Academic Board, chaired by the Culinary Arts Director, is responsible for the monitoring of academic standards and approval of student progression and awards, which are monitored by the external examiner.

1.32 The clear guidance on the management of assessment as set out in the Quality Manual, programme specifications, assessment guides and briefs ensures that the assessments remain clear, of the correct standard, and relevant to the learning outcomes.

Oversight is maintained by the Academic Board, Examination Boards and by regular meetings of the Teaching and Learning Committee and Teaching Team Meetings.

1.33 The team reviewed minutes of meetings, programme specifications, assessment guides and course manuals, and met with both staff and students to explore management and the student view of assessment.

1.34 The team concluded that assessment procedures and overall strategies, which are monitored by the awarding organisation and linked to external criteria, are of the appropriate standard, and the Expectation is met. The specialist nature of provision is managed with reference to appropriate industry standards. The team is determined the risk to be 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**

1.35 The awarding organisation is responsible for ensuring that the overall academic standards are met and maintained. The Institute has clear procedures to meet its responsibilities for academic standards to monitor and assure the quality of teaching and learning and assessment, through procedures in the Quality Manual. The process is based on regular Exam Boards, Teaching and Learning Committee meetings and oversight by the Academic Board to ensure both academic standards and student progress and achievement, and aligned with the NCFE quality statements.

1.36 Programme delivery and outcomes of assessment are kept under regular review, with all key committees meeting on a three-monthly basis to accommodate the four intakes to programmes each year. Feedback from both the internal quality assurer and the external examiner inform the review and management of assessment. All assessments modifications are agreed by the external examiner having first been approved by the Examination Board.

1.37 The awarding organisation visits the Institute every six months to check on management of provision and the external examiner is involved in the approval of assignments and assessment strategies, including updates and amendments, with feedback reviewed and outcomes considered as part of the Examination Boards.

1.38 The Institute's Quality Assurance Cycle requires that programme teams produce termly reports in support of its three-month delivery programme. The monitoring reports draw on end-of-term reports from teaching staff, student performance data, student feedback surveys and feedback from the Student Representative Group, as well as external examiner feedback. Annual Monitoring Reports are presented to Academic Board and circulated to other centres internationally.

1.39 An action plan linked to each Annual Monitoring Report ensures that actions points are followed up and progress evaluated at Teaching and Learning Committee and subsequent Academic Boards. All reports are also provided to the awarding organisation. The biannual external examiner reports provide for independent comment and scrutiny, and assure that programme standards are being maintained, and updates on key actions are reported through the Culinary Arts Director's weekly action update.

1.40 The clear and formal procedures for the ongoing monitoring and review of programmes on a termly basis ensures that quality and standards are maintained. In 2015 the Institute commissioned an Internal Review of its management of quality and standards and implemented a number of adjustments to the Quality Manual to support greater consistency and transparency of process. Standards and matters related to quality and delivery of provision are identified and discussed at the Teaching and Learning Committee meetings. Any recommendations are reviewed and actions approved by Academic Board. The relevant actions are implemented and progress kept under review through the committee structure.

1.41 The minutes of a large number of committee meetings were reviewed by the team, and termly and annual monitoring reports considered along with reports from NCFE and the external examiner. The team also met with academic staff and students and confirmed that feedback from the external examiner, student surveys and external assessors' input, along with achievement data, inform the ongoing monitoring and review of provision.

1.42 Based on the range and consistency of evidence, the team concluded that the Institute has appropriate mechanisms in place to fulfil its responsibility for the monitoring of academic standards, and that the Expectation is met and the 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**

1.43 The Institute uses external academics and food industry experts at appropriate points, including those required by the Quality Code. The arrangements for the use, selection, training and induction of external examiners and external assessors, as well as the use of independent experts in programme and course development and assessment, are set out in the Quality Manual. The Institute's policies and procedures for the use of external academics and experts would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.44 The review team examined the policies governing the selection and use of external experts as well as examples of recent reports from external examiners.

1.45 Academic Board includes an 'invited external member' from either the food industry or academia. Academic Board makes the final decisions on programme and course approvals or major amendments. The external member is asked to sign a checklist verifying that key elements of the process have been properly conducted. In addition, the Institute consults professional, statutory and regulatory bodies where required before final approval. Le Cordon Bleu International is also consulted before new programmes are approved.

1.46 All programmes at level 4 involve an external examiner with experience of assessment in the sector. Appropriate induction and written guidance are provided. External examiners are asked to verify all new assessments, are present at Examination Boards, and provide an annual written report to the Academic Board. These reports form a key part of the annual monitoring of programmes and courses. External examiners may raise concerns at any time with the Culinary Arts Director.

1.47 The Institute uses independent external assessors when conducting practical culinary assessments. These are industry professionals who take part in blind tasting panels and who are integrated in the process of judging the performance of students during practical examinations. The assessors also each double mark one individual student in order to benchmark the standards applied by the Institute's examiners.

1.48 The evidence heard by the team from both its own teaching staff and from senior professionals from the restaurant and food industry indicated that the Institute is keenly aware of changes and developments in the culinary arts and that its staff are well integrated into appropriate professional networks.

1.49 The evidence seen and heard by the review team confirms that the Institute's use of external and independent expertise to set and maintain academic standards meets the Expectation, and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**



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

1.50 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in the published handbook.

1.51 There are seven Expectations in this area and all are met with a low level of risk, and there are no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice.

1.52 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of awarding organisations at the Institute **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 The management of the programme development and approval are set out in the Quality Manual and comply with the requirements of the awarding organisation. The Institute is responsible for the development of the programmes it offers to date, which are accredited by NCFE and are mapped against National Occupational Standards. Recently an agreement has been made with Birkbeck, University of London to deliver a programme jointly for a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, which the Institute planned to offer for the first time in September 2017, but which has now been deferred to a later date.

2.2 Programmes are designed and developed with a view to developing the skills and knowledge required to enable its students to progress to employment within the culinary and hospitality sector. All learning outcomes are mapped to National Occupational Standards and reviewed by the awarding organisation. All programme developments are required to demonstrate at the proposal stage that they reflect links to the organisation's business objectives, meet industry needs, complement current provision, integrate theory and practical knowledge and skills, and promote personal and professional development.

2.3 A clear and deliberative process is operated for the design and approval of programmes which includes consultation with professional bodies and industry reference groups, academic staff and students and alumni, as appropriate, to inform developments. Evidence of likely demand for the provision is needed, along with a clear rationale for the development, estimated costs of development, timelines and consideration of courses offered by other providers. Proposals are presented to the Academic Board for consideration and agreement, as well as to the parent organisation, Le Cordon Bleu International, prior to development of specifications.

2.4 Programme development processes and requirements are clearly set out in the Quality Manual in an eight-stage process. Once approval for the development of a programme is in place, the development team being made up of academics working with and building on feedback from sector experts, a draft specification is prepared. The aims and learning objectives are drafted along with the core curriculum to be covered and unit descriptors developed, reflecting sector professional practices and standards.

2.5 The teaching requirements and methods are defined along with the delivery structure and resource requirements. Assessment procedures and strategies require scrutiny and approval by the external examiner to ensure that they are clear, enable learning outcomes to be met and meet standards requirements. Content and outcomes are also mapped to external reference points including National Occupation Standards and the IIQ quality statements, and informed by external consultation with professional and industry bodies. Employer representatives and alumni who attended a meeting with the team confirmed that the skills and knowledge developed by students are seen as state of the art and make graduates highly employable.

2.6 The entry and exit point requirements are also defined as part of the programme development and approval process, along with the terms and conditions and the fee structure. These are reflected in the Course Information Document, which is produced in cooperation with the admissions team, and in the draft programme specification. The programme documents are reviewed by an external member of the Academic Board and academic staff from Le Cordon Bleu International to provide additional externality and an independent view of the coherence and general standards of the programme development. Final modifications are made as required and the finalised programme is then sent to Academic Board and Le Cordon Bleu International for approval and ratification and passed on for accreditation by the awarding organisation.

2.7 Amendments and improvement to existing programmes are made on the basis of feedback from students, staff, external industry advisors, the external examiner and other stakeholders to ensure their continuing validity and to support improvements. Proposed changes are discussed by teaching teams, and proposals reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee, Examination Boards, the external examiner and Academic Board, which provides final approval. Variations and changes to programmes reflect new industry practices, as in the case of Pâtisserie, which has included more quantifiable assessments and independent design elements within the programme.

2.8 The review team met with senior staff, academic staff and students to explore their involvement with programme development and review. Student feedback and review of assessment are key factors informing programme modifications in an effort to improve the quality of the student learning experience and the accessibility and effectiveness of assessment. Academic Board minutes and the minutes of other deliberative meetings provide a clear indication that the Institute strives to review and to improve the range of provision offered, as informed by students, staff and external stakeholders.

2.9 The team concluded that systems are clear and effective and that programme development is informed by the future employability of students. Additional review and approval of new programmes by the external awarding organisation and sector bodies, and the inclusion of external reference points, support a conclusion that the Expectation is met and that 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**

2.10 The Institute has a comprehensive admissions policy that promotes equality and diversity and is aligned to the Quality Code. It clearly states the prerequisites and entry requirements for prospective students. The admissions policy and procedures are located in the Quality Manual and the Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures Handbook to which staff and students have access. Prospective students can access this information via the Institute's website and admissions and marketing documentation.

2.11 Prospective students have to fulfil application assessment criteria, which includes their technical ability and motivation to succeed. During selection, prospective students are monitored by Student Liaison Executives and Admissions staff to assess their 'genuineness' and suitability for their chosen programme. In addition, the applicants are asked to provide a statement of motivation which is used to assess their intention to study.

2.12 The Institute undertakes internal assessments to establish the level of English language of applicants. Non-visa students must provide evidence of an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or non-IELTS English language certificate, and students who require a Tier 4 Visa must provide evidence of an IELTS test resulting in a score of 5.5 or above in order to complete a programme at the Institute. In addition, applicants are assessed against their experience of previous education and employment within the culinary industry.

2.13 The admissions process is overseen by the Admissions Manager and a member of the Admission Jury, which has responsibility for approving admissions. The Admissions Policy and Procedure is reviewed annually and was revised in 2014 and 2015 to take account respectively of the Quality Code and a review of the student contract.

2.14 The Institute's staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities with regard to the application processes. The team found that the support for prospective students is comprehensive and provides for consultation and advice with the Institute's admissions staff.

2.15 The review team explored the admissions procedure at the Institute and its effectiveness in meetings with staff and students, reviewed relevant documentation, and concluded that the processes at the Institute are robust and well managed. In addition, students whom the team met confirmed that the processes and information are fair and accessible.

2.16 The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

### **Quality Code, Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching**

#### **Findings**

2.17 The Institute articulates an explicit approach to the learning and teaching of the culinary arts in its publications and on its website. These include in particular the Teaching and Learning Policy and the comprehensive statements of principles and objectives in the Programme Specifications and the Course Manuals. The Teaching and Learning Committee is charged with monitoring evaluations and outcomes of teaching methods. Consideration of learning and teaching outcomes is shared among staff and students through the mechanisms of the Student Representative Group (SRG), student feedback surveys and individual student evaluation journals. The Institute has in place explicit policies and procedures designed to ensure that the learning environment is monitored, maintained and developed. Student engagement in monitoring their own learning is facilitated through continuous formative assessments of their progress and the written and electronic records of individual feedback from the teaching chefs. Together these policies and practices would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.18 The review team read a range of documents describing the Institute's academic policies and the development of its learning and teaching strategies, together with minutes of committees accountable for the management and review of teaching practices and the development and allocation of learning resources. The team met teaching and professional staff responsible for curriculum design and learning support and heard from students on the ways in which they are supported in their learning.

2.19 The practical and vocational character of the courses delivered at the Institute means that students generally both attend classes and receive feedback on their performance on a daily basis. The students receive and add evaluations of their progress to their Student Evaluation Journals at the end of each practical class. There is a mid-term review for all students; should they be judged to have been struggling at any stage then their chef tutor will instigate a personal review.

2.20 Since 2012 the Institute has operated in a new building with fully equipped teaching and practice facilities. Students are able to develop their skills in small groups of no more than 16, each working with a chef/lecturer in a modern teaching kitchen. There is considerable expenditure on new resources in terms of capital equipment, driven by an annual investment plan. Kitchen equipment and demonstration areas are state of the art and constantly enhanced as innovation dictates. The upgrading of facilities or equipment is implemented either when needs are identified after each term, or as part of the ongoing update of the annual action plan and the annual capital expenditure plan. The review team identified as **good practice** the resourcing and management of a learning environment that provides students with access to modern, state of the art, kitchen and demonstration facilities.

2.21 The teaching chef/lecturers are recruited with substantial industry experience at a high level and are then encouraged and supported by the Institute to obtain teaching qualifications and additional skills. New members of staff are given a well-structured induction and are required to shadow more senior mentors to understand their roles and the

Institute's patterns of delivery. The Quality Manual outlines the core elements of the Institute's framework for staff development including the requirements for staff induction, annual appraisal and peer review. All members of the teaching teams have an ongoing training plan that is evaluated annually in appraisals. The review team was provided with evidence that the Institute encourages and finances staff to attend professional and training events within the food and restaurant industry and also to visit the other Institutes within the international Cordon Bleu Group. The staff met by the review team indicated that the arrangements supporting their ongoing development as chefs and teachers were effective and appreciated. The Institute does not, however, have an explicit overarching policy or plan to guide its considerable investments in staff skills. The review team **recommends** that the Institute develops an explicit strategy to inform and guide the deployment of resources allocated to staff development.

2.22 The Student Representative Group (SRG) is involved in the monitoring of current courses and their development. The SRG has an extended meeting to consider annual monitoring. Matters arising from SRG meetings are incorporated into the annual monitoring report, which is prepared by the Teaching and Learning Committee led by the Academic Director.

2.23 The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for the preparation of the annual monitoring report and routinely discusses course delivery, curriculum modifications and peer observation of teaching. The minutes demonstrate the continuous monitoring of the quality of student learning and progress. The annual review of each programme draws on examination board minutes and student performance data, external examiner reports, student survey reports, SRG minutes and end-of-term reports to the Teaching and Learning Committee. Central oversight is the responsibility of the Academic Board, which monitors academic standards and enhancements to learning opportunities on a termly basis and through the annual monitoring reports. The staff and students met by the team confirmed that the roles and responsibilities of the individual committees in monitoring and review are clear.

2.24 The review team concludes that the evidence it has seen on the management of learning and teaching, the maintenance of the learning environment, and the support for student engagement in their own learning demonstrates that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

**Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement**

**Findings**

2.25 The documentation supporting the level 4 programmes delivered by the Institute emphasises an approach in which 'the learner is central in the learning process' and the programmes 'support the personal and professional development of each student - fostering innovation, ethical and professional practice, and enhancing future employment prospects'. Level 4 programmes include 'graduate outcomes' that, in addition to the core culinary skills, involve the 'communication of ideas and information using a wide range of media; critical and creative thinking with a global perspective of international culinary arts; social interaction and hospitality skills'.

2.26 All the programmes delivered by the Institute include elements designed to support the professional and skills development of students and to ensure that they are in a strong position to succeed in their chosen career pathway. Students attend professional development tutorials which encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. Group and individual tutorials focus on skills in writing curriculum vitae, culinary mathematics, research and writing skills and communications. These teaching and learning objectives, together with the provision that supports them, would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.27 The team read a range of documentation describing the teaching and learning methods applied by the Institute and explored with students and teaching staff the ways in which students are helped to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

2.28 Support for, and monitoring of, individual student development and transitions are a core part of each programme delivered by the Institute, rather than an element additional to academic learning. The vocational nature of the programmes delivered by the Institute, essentially the development of culinary and related skills, means that the courses focus on students learning specific new knowledge and techniques during each daily attendance. Students can also choose to include an internship addition to their programmes.

2.29 The teaching and learning methods that are integral to each course require students to monitor and record their progress and feedback from staff after each class or practical session. As part of the assessment of the level 4 programmes, students submit a portfolio which includes a 'self-reflective review of your journey at Le Cordon Bleu' including technical and personal task related achievements in terms of 'goals at the beginning, your achievements and your future goals'. Students met by the team confirmed that the Institute supported the development of their personal and professional skills and potential.

2.30 The Institute provides a virtual learning environment to provide students with access to learning materials and articles on professional practices, which the students value. An onsite library is also available, providing access to key texts and other sector publications; however, this is only open for two hours per day. Students reported that they are not always able to access the library due to being timetabled for classes, and that this can have an impact on their research, preparation for assessment and the planning of their career choices. The team **recommends** that the Institute reviews library opening hours to enable greater access for students.

2.31 The evidence seen and heard by the team confirms that the Expectation is met and that the 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**

2.32 The engagement of students is clearly outlined in the Student Handbook, which details the Institute's commitment to ensuring the views of students, individually and collectively, are captured, addressed and applied to enhance academic processes and the student experience.

2.33 The Institute's student support system is centred within the Student Representative Group (SRG), which provides a forum between the student body and the senior management team. New members of the SRG receive training to enable them to understand their responsibilities and the opportunities presented to them to engage with the Institute's senior staff. The SRG convenes termly and meetings are chaired by either the Institute's Academic Director or the Culinary Arts Director. Student representatives elect a Chair termly who sits on the Academic Board and also acts as a point of contact between the SRG and the Student Liaison Officers. Students whom the review team met confirmed that they are able to request informal meetings with staff to discuss their experience and secure verbal feedback.

2.34 The Institute's virtual learning environment provides students with a full range of information to assist their learning including feedback on summative and formative assessments, and advice on their transition into the industry.

2.35 Students confirmed in meetings with the review team that the support offered by the Institute and the Student Representative Group improved their learning experience. The Institute's staff, also in their meetings with the review team, gave a clear understanding of the value of the student representational structures, and their commitment to student engagement.

2.36 The review team finds that the Expectation is met, and that 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**

2.37 The Institute operates an assessment policy and procedure which is set out in the Quality Manual. Assessment strategies and requirements are also outlined in the programme specifications, the course manuals, the Academic and Administration Policies and Procedures, and in the assessment guides. Detailed assessment approaches are set out in the Assessment Guide for each programme, which includes assessment schedules, grading criteria and assessment regulations, and delivery of programmes and assessment requirements recorded in the Teaching Manuals. Attendance requirements are also clearly set out in the Student Handbook, and students are made aware that where too many sessions are missed, they will not be eligible to undertake final assessments or to gain their qualification.

2.38 Oversight of assessment and the development of appropriate assessment regimes lies with the Teaching and Learning Committee, which meets regularly each term to review assessment. Input and oversight is also provided by the Examination Boards, which also meet termly, and remits specifying responsibilities are set out in the Quality Manual. Assessment strategies are kept under review by course teams to ensure that they remain current and reflect industry standard practices, informed by both sector knowledge of the teaching staff, all of whom have backgrounds in the hospitality industry. External assessors also contribute to the review of assessments through their participation in practical assessments, and their sector expertise is used to ensure that practices and assessment methodologies reflect current industry practices and requirements. New assessments, or significant changes to assessment, are forwarded to the external examiner for comment and approval.

2.39 Assessment is managed effectively to reflect the practical nature of the skills and knowledge of the culinary programmes. Students undertake a number of practical assessments alongside examinations which assess their understanding of the theoretical elements. Students are informed of the purpose and context of assessment strategies associated with their programmes at the start of their studies, which is also set out in the course manuals in line with the requirements of the Quality Manual, and in the assessment guides.

2.40 Both formative and summative assessment form part of the assessment strategy, and students are expected to keep reflective logs, including as part of internship placements. All assessment is underpinned by evaluation principles which include testing the authenticity, validity, reliability, sufficiency and currency of knowledge and student competence. All assessment criteria are set out in the course manuals, and standardised forms are utilised. In the case of summative practical assessments, a panel is used to assess outcomes, and tasting is done on a blind marking basis utilising the assessment criteria, with marks awarded for both presentation and taste. Staff are provided with training on marking requirements, and results are discussed at teaching team meetings to ensure the consistency and quality of marking, and to identify any further staff development requirements. Further consideration is given to achievement and progression through the

termly examination boards, and final outcomes and standards are reviewed by the external examiner.

2.41 Preparation for final assessments is supported by practical teaching sessions linked to the assessment tasks, and students working in small groups receive ongoing formative feedback. Students are also provided with a practice session for each individual dish and a mock examination which prepares them for their final assessment. Students confirmed that they understand the assessment criteria and that the clear and in-depth feedback assists them in building their skills, in preparation for final formal assessments, which are also assessed by external sector assessors. External assessors are provided with briefings and assessment criteria by the teaching chefs, and their comments inform final assessment decisions. For written assessments, at least 10 per cent of assessments are second marked, and all written assessments are submitted through an online plagiarism checker to establish the originality of individual work. The external examiner also moderates the overall standard of work.

2.42 Feedback is provided to students on an ongoing basis as part of the formative assessment activities, and recorded by students in their evaluation journals. Feedback linked to final practical assessments is provided through individual debriefing sessions as well as through written feedback, which is made available to students online. In the case of written assignments, plagiarism-detection software is used, and students submit their work through the Institute's learning management system. Students are able to access their feedback online through the Institute's virtual learning environment, and also via a downloadable mobile application, which ensures that students have access to timely and constructive feedback. The comprehensive and informative virtual learning environment that enables students to access feedback on assessments remotely is **good practice**.

2.43 An internship pathway is available only in conjunction with the Diploma in Culinary Management, though further internship pathways are under consideration. The Institute has agreements with a number of notable restaurants and hotel groups, students are supported in finding suitable placements, and work is being undertaken to expand opportunities for internships overseas, which would be of value to overseas students. Students keep a reflective journal of their activities which forms part of their summative assessment. Feedback is also sought from internship supervisors on the quality of the student work and progress.

2.44 All students are expected to achieve an overall pass grade on both practical and theory tests. Progressive grading is kept electronically and is accessed by tutors to inform mid-term tutorial sessions. Students are able to access their grades to monitor their own progress through online feedback and through meetings with tutors. Overall progress of students on individual programmes is monitored at Examination Boards. To further ensure that all staff teaching and assessing students are aware of any special requirements, an icon appears on registers which informs staff of any individual student needs, and adjustments made as set out in the Reasonable Adjustments Policy. This sharing of information ensures that all staff who are setting and marking assessments can consistently accommodate any additional needs, including dyslexia, food allergies or other assessment-related considerations. The online icon system for identifying individual students' additional support needs and a system of fair assessment represents **good practice**.

2.45 The Institute has robust procedures for the management of assessment, which include internal verification and moderation of assessments by the Internal Quality Assurer. Internal moderation of results includes a sampling of 20 per cent of marking for all practical work, and 10 per cent of written assessments. For new programmes larger samples are internally moderated and may result in the remarking of work as appropriate. The Academic Director chairs Examination Boards and maintains an overview of marking

and moderation of assessment to ensure that this is carried out to an appropriate standard. Examination Boards receive reports on assessment from Heads of Programme, and following the Examination Board, the Academic Director prepares a report for Academic Board on progress, issues and developments. Any areas for development are followed up by teaching teams and overseen by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

2.46 Procedures for the recognition of prior learning are specified in the Quality Manual, and clear evidence of prior learning must be provided by the student, particularly where previous qualifications were not achieved at the Institute. Where a student is seeking to gain recognition of prior learning which has not be achieved from another Le Cordon Bleu Institute, the application will be reviewed by the Academic Director and/or the Head of Programme, to ensure that required learning outcomes have been met. Students are advised that applications for consideration of prior learning other than at another Le Cordon Bleu Institute should be made a least three months before the course start date.

2.47 The team reviewed samples of assessment and feedback, notes of teaching team meetings, Teaching and Learning Committee and Examination Board minutes, as well as Academic Board minutes. External reports from the awarding organisation and the external examiner were also considered along with student survey results. In addition, the team also met with staff and students to confirm the management of assessment and feedback.

2.48 The team concluded that given the clear and robust processes and monitoring and reporting mechanisms, the Expectation is met and the associated 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**

2.49 All programmes at level 4 involve an external examiner with experience of assessment in the sector. The selection, roles, induction and support for external examiners are prescribed in the Quality Manual. External examiners comment on proposed summative assessments and are normally present at examination boards. They also provide an annual written report to the Academic Board. External examiners may raise concerns at any time with the Culinary Arts Director. The Quality Manual requires that the Institute responds to the annual reports from externals. The Institute also uses independent industry professionals when conducting practical culinary assessments. These policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.50 The review team examined documentation, including the minutes of examination boards, describing the use of external examiners as well as recent reports received from external examiners. In meetings with teaching staff and students their understandings of the roles of external examiners were explored.

2.51 Appropriate induction and written guidance are provided, consisting of a comprehensive induction manual and a checklist of duties. External examiners are asked to comment on all new assessments and confirm that practice tasks set are appropriate. They also assist examination boards when adjudicating on appeals. As part of induction, the current external examiner had attended examination boards for two terms before assuming the role. The reports provided by recent external examiners confirmed not only that marks are awarded at appropriate levels but also the high quality of learning resources and relevance of the curricula. The Expectation is met and the 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**

2.52 The Institute has clear processes for the review and monitoring of both its shorter and longer courses at both programme level and Institute level, allowing for clear oversight to be maintained. Programme Leaders are responsible for the monitoring of their programmes, and report on progress and issues to the Teaching and Learning Committee, which in turn reports key progress and actions to the Academic Board.

2.53 Monitoring and review of individual programmes takes place every three months as part of the quality assurance cycle set out in the Quality Manual. Reports produced by individual heads of programme, drawing on individual end-of-term reports for individual courses, are scrutinised by the Teaching and Learning Committee and key actions, good practices and areas for development reported to Academic Board. Key actions are added to the Institute action plan, and monitored by the Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Board. Weekly updates are provided on key actions by the Culinary Director to monitor and support ongoing improvements, which are circulated to all staff.

2.54 Programme review reports include consideration of a number of factors including student progression and achievement, end-of-term reports from individual programmes, student feedback gathered through student surveys, feedback from the Student Representative Group and feedback from external examiner visits, as appropriate. Programme review and end-of-term reports inform the annual monitoring and review process, with reports being reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and key outcomes being forwarded to the Academic Board for their consideration and approval of associated actions. Drawing on end-of-term reports and programme review reports, annual monitoring reports include consideration of achievement rates, appeals lodged and outcomes, feedback from students and from external examiners, developments that have taken place during the last year, as well as progress against items in the action plan. Academic Board maintains oversight of the quality of the student learning experience through consideration of reports and the evaluation of actions against recommendations for enhancement, and tracking of progress against items in the Institute Action Plan.

2.55 The focus of the programme review and the annual monitoring procedures is to allow the Institute to maintain oversight of quality of student learning, and to identify areas of good practice as well as areas for further development and improvement. Annual monitoring reports are circulated to staff and made available to the Student Representative Group, as well as to other bodies internationally. The Student Representative Group is invited to review the student experience and to inform termly reports with suggestions for improvement and evaluation of changes implemented. Staff development needs are also identified in the reports and associated action plans, as appropriate.

2.56 The Academic Board is responsible for monitoring progress against action plans at Institute level, and in particular changes to programmes and assessment, as well as development of resources and issues related to student progression and achievement. While Examination Boards focus on student results and any appeals, Teaching and Learning Committee, Programme Teams and Academic Board use the programme monitoring and review process to ensure that standards are effectively maintained, and that students receive the support and guidance they require. The regular review of achievement,

end-of-term reports and consideration of the student voice allow the Institute to maintain effective and ongoing overview, which is captured in the Annual Monitoring Reports. External examiners are also given access to annual monitoring reports as part of the quality and standards monitoring process.

2.57 The ongoing monitoring and review processes, as set out in the Quality Manual, and evidence through the programme review and annual monitoring process, also allow for programmes to be withdrawn if they are perceived as not serving the academic needs of students, or are not proving attractive to applicants. Programme development is clearly evidence as an ongoing process, as discussed under *Chapter B1* above. No programmes have been withdrawn in the last year.

2.58 Programme accreditation is reviewed and updated by NCFE on a three-yearly basis and informed by consideration of external examiner reports, and information and monitoring reports provided by the Institute. The processes serve to ensure that programmes remain current and fit for purpose, and the need for revisions to curriculum and sector practices are reflected in the approved provision.

2.59 The team met with staff and students to discuss their knowledge and understanding of the programme monitoring and review process. Annual monitoring reports, programme review reports, minutes of Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Board meetings were reviewed, as well as the Quality Manual and minutes of the Student Representative Group. The team concluded that the Institute has robust mechanisms in place for the regular review of programmes, which feeds into the annual monitoring process. Action plans are kept under regular review and progress is clearly documented.

2.60 The review team found that the comprehensive system of termly and annual reviews, accompanied by effective action plans that record progress, is **good practice**, and concluded that the Expectation is met and that the level of risk is identified as 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**

2.61 The Institute has a robust and effective Appeals and Complaints process, underpinned by a clear policy, understood by all staff and students. Information surrounding appeals and complaints is available to prospective students via the Institute's website, and is provided and explained to new students during their enrolment process.

2.62 Once enrolled on their chosen programme of study, students can access the Appeals and Complaints Policy and procedure via the Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures Handbook and the Institute's comprehensive virtual learning environment.

2.63 Students have the opportunity to raise concerns or problems informally at the end of each class, when staff provide individual feedback to each student, which is recorded in their Student Evaluation Journals. Students can raise issues formally through the Student Representative Group, which is chaired by a senior member of staff.

2.64 The Examination Board considers student appeals in cases where students have failed a course or a unit, before referral to the Academic Board where the appeal is ultimately approved or declined. Decisions of the Academic Board are final. If students are dissatisfied with the results of an assessment or the verdict of an Examination Board, they have the right to appeal against the decision. All appeals are summarised within the annual monitoring process.

2.65 The Institute's policies and procedures for student complaints and academic appeals would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.66 The review team met with staff and students to discuss their understanding of the Appeals and Complaints Policy and their implementation. In addition, the team considered information provided by the Institute to assess fairness and accessibility.

2.67 Overall, the team found that the Institute's approach to complaints and appeals is clear and fit for purpose, and student complaints and academic appeals are often resolved informally. The review team concluded that the processes are effective and understood by both staff and students.

2.68 The Expectation is met, and the 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**

2.69 At the time of the review the Institute worked with others in the delivery of programmes in three ways. Agreements have been reached with restaurants in the UK and abroad to support three-month internships for students choosing the 'internship pathway' as part of their programme of study. Secondly, the Institutes in the International Cordon Bleu Group recognise the awards provided by each other. It is therefore possible for students to study for Basic, Intermediate and Superior levels of their diploma pathways at different Institutes in the group, and a small number of students do this. This process is governed by the application of the Institute's policy and procedures for the recognition of prior learning. Thirdly, the Institute had entered into a partnership with Birkbeck, University of London, to design and provide teaching for a new BBA in Culinary Industry Management, which would admit students from September 2018.

2.70 The internship pathways are integrated programmes which add a fourth internship term to the three taught terms. The internship takes place after Superior level in each case, and preparation sessions are built into the preceding three levels. Lessons are provided to prepare students who are applying for places within the food industry, and students are monitored throughout the internship, which is assessed through the submission of a portfolio. Where programmes include internship placements, the assessment requirements are set out in the Internship Handbook and in the Student Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.71 Students receive individual support from the Institute when applying for an internship and throughout its duration. The support includes internship agreements, guidance on CV and cover letter writing, practice internship interviews, ongoing support while on the internship, visits to students onsite to monitor progress, and addressing any student or employer concerns that arise. Each internship partner signs an agreement with the Institute and an individual contract with the student setting out the responsibilities on both sides. The partners provide a workplace mentor and complete assessment evaluations of the student both during and on completion of the internship.

2.72 The intern and the partner organisation jointly maintain a weekly record of activities and performance, including a mid-term and final set of assessment outcomes. Students also maintain an internship journal and complete a final report, both of which are part of the final assessment. Students are required to pass the internship assessment in order to be awarded the relevant diploma. Students and staff who had been involved in internships were able to confirm that the arrangements operated satisfactorily.

2.73 At the time of the review, the Internship Pathway had been introduced relatively recently and there had been eight students in the most recent cohort. However, the Institute was expanding this route to the diploma and had admitted 40 students to it for the next term. This had required reaching agreements to accept interns with a much enlarged number of restaurants and hoteliers in the UK and abroad. The team also heard from past students that they would have welcomed more opportunities for placements in the food industries during their programmes. The review team recognised the progress being taken to develop further

the internship pathways available to students on diploma programmes.

2.74 The evidence seen and heard by the team showed that arrangements for delivering learning opportunities through internships were implemented securely and managed effectively, and the Expectation is met and the 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**

**Expectation: Not applicable**

**Level of risk: Not applicable**

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.75 In reaching its judgements about the quality of learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria in the published handbook.

2.76 There are 11 Expectations in this area, of which 10 are applicable to the Institute. All that are applicable are met, with a low level of risk.

2.77 The review team identified four features of good practice and made two recommendations.

2.78 The features of good practice in this area are concerned with sections B3, B6 and B8.

2.79 The first feature of good practice, in section B3, relates to the resourcing and management of a learning environment that provides students with access to modern, state of the art, kitchen and demonstration facilities.

2.80 The review team's second and third features of good practice are in section B6 and are concerned with the comprehensive and informative virtual learning environment that enables students to access feedback on assessments remotely, the online icon system for identifying individual students' additional support needs, and a system of fair assessment.

2.81 The final feature of good practice, in section B8, relates to the comprehensive system of termly and annual reviews accompanied by effective action plans that record progress.

2.82 The first recommendation, in section B3, relates to the review team finding that the Institute does not have an explicit overarching policy or plan to guide its considerable investments in staff skills. The team therefore recommends, by April 2018, that the Institute develops an explicit strategy to inform and guide the deployment of resources allocated to staff development.

2.83 The review team's second recommendation is in section B4, and is concerned with the review team's finding that students are not always able to access the library and that this can have an impact on their research, preparation for assessment, and the planning of their career choices. The team recommends that, by April 2018, the Institute reviews library opening hours to enable greater access for students.

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

### 3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

#### Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

##### Findings

3.1 The Institute has the responsibility of providing a comprehensive range of information and documentation for all stakeholders detailing specific information concerning the provision of its learning opportunities.

3.2 To fulfil requirements for both prospective and current students, the Institute publishes information on its website and in documents used in the recruitment, admission and selection process of students. Course fees and term dates are accessible via these sources and with regard to Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance. The Institute's Marketing Policy sets out a clear process for the creation and development of published information to ensure that it is trustworthy, accurate and accessible to the public.

3.3 Information about the Institute's values and programmes is available to staff and students through student handbooks, staff handbooks and course manuals. These include information about assessment processes and procedures, and contact details for relevant staff.

3.4 The Institute's virtual learning environment is a rich source of information providing learning resources, course details and a facility for remote feedback. The information on the virtual learning environment and the Institute's website is regularly updated. The website includes all relevant policies and procedures and these are also available in hardcopy through the Quality Manual and the Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures Handbook.

3.5 Information about course details and their content is reviewed termly to maintain accuracy. Changes to course documentation are approved by either Heads of Department, the Teaching and Learning Committee or the Academic Director depending on their nature. This ensures that information provided by the Institute about the learning opportunities they offer is timely, current and transparent.

3.6 The review team considered the information provided by the Institute through scrutiny of published information, both electronic and hard copy, and in meetings with staff and students.

3.7 The team concludes that the Expectation is met, with the level of associated risk being low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

3.8 In reaching its judgements on the quality of the information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in the published handbook. The one Expectation in this area is met, with a low level of risk.

3.9 There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this section.

3.10 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the Institute **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 Institute does not have a separate enhancement policy or strategy, but procedures for supporting enhancement of the student learning experience are incorporated into the quality cycle set out in the Quality Manual. The quarterly programme review system, which includes consideration of student achievement as reported to Examination Boards, the student voice as captured in student surveys, and feedback from the Student Representative Group, Industry Reference Group, external examiner and external assessor reports, are part of the ongoing monitoring and review process by which the Institute identifies areas of good practice and areas for further development.

4.2 Consideration of areas for enhancement is based on feedback from students, external examiners, industry specialists who provide updates on sector practices, and staff experiences, which include visits to high profile restaurants and hotels. The quality cycle reviews form the basis for gathering information on areas for enhancement based on teaching and learning reviews and outcomes, which are included in the end-of-term and programme review reports. Suggestions from the Industry Reference group and other stakeholders are reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee and included in reports to Academic Board, and inform the Institute Action Plan as appropriate.

4.3 The Student Representative Group is provided with the opportunity to review reports and look at student feedback with a view to identifying areas for enhancement. Some of the initiatives have included a recycling programme and more demonstrations from sector experts. The suggested actions are reviewed by Academic Board, and where possible actions are taken, or longer-term solutions sought. The students are informed of decisions through tutors or their student representatives. Key areas for development are set out in the Institute's annual monitoring report and actions included in the Institute's action plan, with progress regularly monitored by Academic Board.

4.4 The Industry Reference Group serves as a source of external information for the Institute, assists in providing updates on developments within the sector, and informs the development of programmes. The views of the Industry Reference Group are used not only to inform new programme development, but also the review and revision of programmes to ensure that they reflect the demands of the employment market. The wide range of Le Cordon Bleu contacts nationally and internationally supports regular talks and demonstrations by leading chefs, which the students report are very useful in providing access to best professional practices, and greatly appreciated as enhancing their knowledge of current practices. Demonstration areas are equipped with cameras so that students can view work on screens and see close detail. Currently, demonstrations are not recorded to allow students to view techniques again. Students are also provided with opportunities to act as assistants on chef demonstrations which also enhances their skills and confidence. The opportunities to view demonstrations by leading practitioners as part of the learning programme, which extends students' knowledge, represents **good practice**.

4.5 Students on the diploma programmes are also provided with opportunities to visit restaurants, wine producers and vendors, food events and other sector-specific venues, which they value as an enhancement to their learning experience. Social and subject demonstration evenings are organised by the Institute as a way of bringing together students

from different programmes and promoting networking. Examples were provided by the academic staff of events where fishmongers and butchers could bring in produce and inform students about food fraud and food quality. Students on the wine programme organise wine demonstration nights, which allows students to share their knowledge.

4.6 Student learning is supported from the outset of admission with students having access to study skills support from the start of their studies, which is explained as part of Induction. Students are also supported by dedicated staff members who organise careers events and provide workshops on the drafting of CVs. Employability skills also form a part of kitchen sessions, and employers and alumni report that this method of teaching enhances student employability. Learning is enhanced through access to state of the art kitchens which are equipped with the latest technology used in high quality restaurants, and the Institute has an annual budget and maintenance plan to ensure that facilities are maintained and upgraded to keep pace with sector developments. The Institute further ensures that the quality of student learning is enhanced through supporting opportunities for staff to undertake continuing professional development.

4.7 The team met with staff and students to discuss the student learning experience and to gain an understanding of how enhancement is managed. Annual monitoring reports, programme review reports, minutes of Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Board meetings were reviewed, as well as the Quality Manual and minutes of the Student Representative Group.

4.8 The team concluded that the Institute reviews provision regularly, and uses student and sector feedback to identify good practices and to build enhancement of student learning. The team concluded that the Expectation is met, and the level of risk is identified as low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**



## The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.9 In reaching its judgements on the enhancement of student learning opportunities the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in the published handbook. The one Expectation in this area is met, with a low level of risk.

4.10 There is one feature of good practice but no recommendations or affirmations in this area.

4.11 The review team found the demonstrations by leading practitioners as part of the learning programme, which extends students' knowledge, to be a feature of good practice.

4.12 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectation.

## Glossary

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

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](http://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](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx).

### Academic standards

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

### Award

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

### Awarding organisation

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

### Blended learning

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

### Credit(s)

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

### Degree-awarding body

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

### Distance learning

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

### Dual award or double award

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

### e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

### **Enhancement**

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

### **Expectations**

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

### **Flexible and distributed learning**

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

### **Framework**

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

### **Framework for higher education qualifications**

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

### **Good practice**

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

### **Learning opportunities**

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

### **Learning outcomes**

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

### **Multiple awards**

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

### **Operational definition**

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

### **Programme (of study)**

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

**Programme specifications**

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

**Quality Code**

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

**Reference points**

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

**Self-evaluation document**

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

**Subject Benchmark Statement**

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

**Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)**

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

**Threshold academic standard**

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

**Virtual learning environment (VLE)**

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

**Widening participation**

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

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