



Higher Education Review of London Business School

September 2014

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at London Business School. The review took place from 22 to 25 September 2014 and was conducted by a team of five reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Gregory Clark
- Dr Sylvia Hargreaves
- Professor John Baldock
- Dr Mary Meldrum
- Mr James Freeman (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review the QAA review team:

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

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

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

The [themes](#) for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Student Employability,² and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

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

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code.

² Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106.

³ QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus.

⁴ Higher Education Review web pages: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about London Business School

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at London Business School.

- The setting and maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards **meet** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at London Business School.

- The particularly comprehensive information, advice and guidance to enable applicants to make an informed choice of programme (Expectation B2).
- The individualised support that enables each student to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subjects in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking (Expectation B3).
- The integrated planning process that ensures the timely provision of a high-quality learning environment and resources to support teaching (Expectation B3).
- The extensive support for students to develop their career opportunities (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to London Business School.

By February 2015:

- ensure that class contribution assessment criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and formally communicated to students (Expectation B6).

By May 2015:

- ensure alignment between course learning outcomes, as set out in course outlines, and programme learning outcomes (Expectation A3.2)
- design and implement a process of assessment which addresses the potential inequity of applying the grading curve to streams rather than cohorts (Expectation B6).

By July 2015:

- expedite the review of programme monitoring and establish a system which is clearly documented, incorporates robust school oversight and is implemented effectively (Expectation A3.3)
- review the scope, extent and consistency of reporting by final programme review groups to ensure that the rigorous scrutiny of outcomes of the internal review stage is clearly documented (Expectation B8)

- put in place a mechanism to collect, review and respond to generic feedback from its research students (Expectation B11).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that London Business School is already taking to make academic standards secure and improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The formalising of programme amendment procedures for core course outlines (Expectation A3.1).

Theme: Student Employability

The School places great emphasis on careers support for students and the School Plan includes clear expectations with very high employability targets for all programmes. The curricula are designed to integrate skills for employability and much support is available for students to help them to manage their career.

The careers service is extremely well resourced, and the School provides a range of innovative and effective initiatives including an extensive programme of additional activities which enable students to engage with a number of major financial employers.

Employers are involved throughout the delivery and development of the curriculum.

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

About London Business School

London Business School is situated in listed buildings alongside Regents Park in London. The School carries out research and delivers postgraduate and doctoral degree programmes and executive education in the field of business and management studies. Its vision is to have a profound impact on the way the world does business. The School has achieved global reach and impact through the development of a series of strategic alliances in key parts of the world, and it now delivers its programmes in four world centres: London, Dubai, Hong Kong and New York. The School is accredited by three external professional bodies: The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), The Association of MBAs (AMBA) and The European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) which provides European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation.

The School was founded in 1964. It functioned as a graduate school of the University of London from its establishment until 1986, when it was awarded a Royal Charter and became a constituent college of the University.

The Royal Charter conferred degree awarding powers on the School. However, it held these powers in abeyance and continued to award University of London degrees until 2010 when, in response to student and alumni feedback, it became one of a number of the University's constituent colleges to begin to award its own degrees.

The School has over 2,000 students, 104 tenured and tenure-track faculty, 31 ancillary academic staff and 618 non-academic staff. Its programme portfolio comprises seven master's-level postgraduate degree programmes and a doctoral programme. The majority of programmes are delivered at its London campus. In addition, the School delivers an Executive MBA (EMBA) programme in Dubai and two further programmes in collaboration

with international partners: the EMBA-Global Americas & Europe programme with Columbia University, and the EMBA-Global Asia programme with Columbia University and The University of Hong Kong.

The full portfolio of programmes is:

EMBA-Global Asia	Part-Time
EMBA-Global Americas & Europe	Part-Time
EMBA (London)	Part-Time
Masters in Finance	Part-Time
Masters in Management	Full-Time
MBA	Full-Time
Master in Finance	Full-Time
Sloan	Full-Time

Since the last QAA review in 2008, the School has adopted a new vision: to have a profound impact on the way the world does business. It aims to realise this vision through the research produced and disseminated by its faculty and the achievements and influence of its degree programme graduates and its executive education participants.

One new programme has been added to the School's postgraduate degree programme portfolio since 2008: the Masters in Management programme, which was launched in 2009.

In February 2010, following student and alumni feedback, the School requested and received approval from the University of London to exercise its degree awarding powers, as described above. The School has exercised its degree awarding powers since then, and has assumed full responsibility for the provision of all of its degree programmes.

The School's PhD programme was accredited by the UK Economic and Social Research Council as a Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) in 2011.

Executive education is an integral part of the School's educational activities. The portfolio consists of approximately 115 programme titles, 25 open enrolment and 90 custom programmes created for individual organisations. Executive education has developed considerably, now serving circa 11,000 participants annually compared with 8,000 in 2008. Executive education is an increasingly important channel through which the School disseminates research to non-academic audiences.

The School identifies the key challenges that it faces as:

- to continue to develop its programmes and learning environment in order to meet the increasingly sophisticated demands of its students and the challenges posed by its competitors
- to ensure that the quality of the academic experience it provides for its students is managed and developed effectively
- to ensure that the quality of the wider programme experience it provides for its students is managed and developed effectively.

Additionally, the School recognises that its global character, with programmes taught in locations around the world, provided in collaboration with international partners, and using an international faculty with little prior experience of UK-style academic regulations, requires a continuing focus on rigour and consistency in maintaining academic standards to the highest UK expectations.

To meet these challenges, the student environment will continue to be developed to ensure the ongoing quality of the School's programmes, with a particular focus on technology and

facilities. In addition, the organisational structure of the Degree Programmes Office has been revised alongside the development of the School's professional development programme for faculty, to ensure continuing high-quality teaching and consistency in relation to the School's quality assurance framework.

Following the 2008 QAA review, the School received a judgement of confidence in all areas of its domestic provision. However, limited confidence was expressed in the soundness of its current and likely future management of the academic standards of its collaborative provision. The School submitted an action plan to QAA in March 2009 which addressed all the recommendations. Six-monthly interim progress reports were also made to QAA until September 2010 when the School submitted a final report. The 2010 QAA mid-cycle follow-up confirmed that all recommendations had been met and that the 2008 review could be signed off as complete.

Explanation of the findings about London Business School

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

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

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

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* 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 School has exercised its degree awarding powers since February 2010 and has assumed full responsibility for the provision of all of its degree programmes since that date. The School is responsible for mapping its qualifications to the FHEQ.

1.2 The School's Academic Regulations align master's programmes to Level 7 and the PhD to Level 8 on the FHEQ and state that programmes are based on the nature and the characteristics of the Subject Benchmark Statement for master's degrees in business and management. The programme review and annual monitoring processes require the confirmation of the continuing appropriateness of the level of study for Level 7 qualifications. In developing learning outcomes and assessment, faculty are specifically advised to ensure the assessment is an appropriate measure of the achievement of learning outcomes. The School programme approval and review processes consider and take account of QAA's guidance on master's and doctoral degree qualification characteristics. When a new programme is approved, the relevant Faculty Advisor and External Advisor are required to confirm that the programme aligns with the relevant qualification descriptor and Subject Benchmark Statement. The School does not assign UK credit.

1.3 The team reviewed the effectiveness of these policies and procedures by looking at documentation supplied to inform processes of approval and review, the minutes of

meetings, validation and other reports, and by talking to academic staff, support staff and senior staff.

1.4 The School effectively carries out its responsibilities for allocating qualifications to the appropriate level of the FHEQ. All taught programme specifications at Level 7 state alignment to the FHEQ. At Level 8, the PhD programme specification was carried over from the University of London and although the team could confirm the programme aligned with the Level 8 framework, this programme is under review and has not yet completed its progress through the School's programme approval process. The School confirmed that the review would include ensuring alignment with the Level 8 qualification descriptor. On taught programmes, qualifications are awarded to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes but there are a lot of programme learning outcomes for each programme. The team found it difficult to see a clear link between programme learning outcomes, course (module) learning outcomes and assessment. Qualifications are named in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the FHEQ. Although taught programme specifications all refer to the Subject Benchmark Statement, they do not provide any detailed mapping to them. The team confirms alignment.

1.5 The School effectively carries out its responsibilities for allocating qualifications to the appropriate level of the FHEQ. Academic staff receive appropriate training, guidance and support to assist with programme design and understanding academic levels. These processes are backed up by strong links with employers and external scrutiny from the major accrediting bodies. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation A1 is met both in design and operation and the associated risk level 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

1.1 In accordance with the School's Royal Charter, its Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for its effective management and future development. The School's Dean (the equivalent of a University Vice-Chancellor) is responsible to the Governing Body for the running of the School.

1.2 The School's three main internal decision-making bodies are a Management Board (the equivalent of a University Senate) whose remit and composition is set out in the School's Standing Committee Handbook and which advises the Governing Body and the Dean on major policies relating to teaching and research, and financial and human resources; an Executive Committee, responsible for taking and implementing key academic and administrative decisions relating to the management of the School; and a Management Committee, responsible for the ongoing management of the School's day-to-day operations.

1.3 Academic frameworks are detailed in the Academic Regulations and these list the qualifications that can be awarded. Taught programmes are defined in programme specifications. The taught programme Academic Regulations detail how different types of credits are awarded and specify which courses count towards the final grade band for an award. A process for determining awards with distinction using a grading curve is specified. The MPhil/PhD Regulations detail the requirements and milestones towards completion.

1.4 The taught programme Academic Regulations dictate that each course must adhere to approved assessment methods and include the terms of reference for the Board of Examiners. Assessment policy is set and maintained by the School's Assessment Policy Committee. The School has set assessment design criteria, regulations on grading (including moderation and second marking) and regulations on expected minimum achievement to pass a course. Course outline guidance specifically states the requirement for assessment to be directly linked to the learning outcomes. Programme specifications include a section on assessment and explain that assessment criteria will assess the students' learning against the learning outcomes.

1.5 The Academic Regulations are reviewed and approved annually in their entirety by the Assessment Policy Committee.

1.6 The team reviewed the effectiveness of the governance arrangements, academic frameworks and regulations by looking at documentation, the minutes of meetings, policies, procedures and regulations, and by talking to academic staff, support staff, programme directors and senior staff.

1.7 Governance arrangements have evolved as the School has grown and there is a lack of clarity among staff of committee responsibilities and lines of reporting. There are a large number of committees for a relatively small institution and there is scope to review and simplify the committee structure. The Standing Committee handbook includes both academic governance and business management committees. Management Board has responsibilities in both areas.

1.8 From September 2014, academic staff induction will include an overview of assessment regulations. The current Faculty Induction Pack covers some of this but regulatory and guidance material is currently distributed across a number of different documents. A new Quality Manual will bring this material together in one place.

1.9 Programme specifications indicate the intended expected programme-level learning outcomes and outline the types of assessment the student can expect. The School is in the process of implementing a newly revised course outline template to ensure course outlines have clear expected course-level learning outcomes and provide details on the assessment(s) the student is expected to complete. In practice there is a great deal of variation in course outlines in complying with the School's guidance. Faculty Advisors review course outlines annually. Course outlines are a mix of course specification and annual operational details and would profit from being split so that there is a standing specification for each course and then a separate annually updated operational statement (course schedule) on how each instance of the course will be implemented for a stream of students.

1.10 The School's Governance arrangements would benefit from review and clarification of reporting arrangements of the various committees and groups. Academic frameworks meet requirements but policies and procedures are held in a variety of documents and will be more accessible when brought together into a single manual. Academic and assessment regulations are clearly documented but course outlines would benefit from further review to ensure that all comply with the School's guidance and provide clear information to students.

1.11 The review team therefore concludes that Expectation A2 is met both in design and operation and the associated risk level is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

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

Findings

1.12 The School regards its programme specifications as 'the definitive documents that outline the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected achievement on a programme level'. In view of their definitive nature, the School advises that programme specifications are reviewed by the external examiners before publication. The School sets its programme specifications within a template which specifies the awarding body (always the School), award, programme title, duration, mode of delivery, FHEQ level (always Level 7), Subject Benchmark Statement (always the master's degree: business and management) and professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation.

1.13 The template then requires educational aims, programme outcomes (comprising knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills/attributes, practical skills/attributes, transferable skills/attributes and values and attributes), learning methods and assessment methods, including an overt statement that the assessment methods will assess the programme outcomes. Finally, the template sets out minimum programme requirements; a programme summary; core and elective courses; any additional programme requirements; student and learning support available; admission criteria; career outcomes; details of any international study; methods for the assimilation and improvement of teaching and learning; a list of mechanisms for the promotion and monitoring of the quality of the teaching and learning experience; and a cross-referral to course outlines or the programme handbook for more detail on course content, learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods and assessment methods. The programme specification template is couched in wording indicating its design for use by students as a definitive document. Indeed, the School advised, for example, that the programme specification would be where students are informed of anticipated, estimated contact time and independent study.

1.14 The School's research programmes are specified directly within its MPhil/PhD Regulations, the MRes Assessment Regulations and the PhD Student Code of Practice, rather than in a separate programme specification.

1.15 In response to queries from the review team, the School stated that the main benchmark used by the School for determining the programme volume of study was a minimum of 1,800 hours of taught and independent learning hours, although the portfolio of seven programme specifications seen by the team recorded 1,950 and 2,400 hours and were otherwise consistent with the template.

1.16 Similarly, the School advised that independent study equated to approximately 2.5 to 3 hours for each 1 hour of taught contact. Again the portfolio of seven programme specifications showed ratios between 1:2.5 and 1:2.0. The School is therefore operating on the basis of an assumed shared understanding of their matters at programme level rather than on a considered decision by the School's academic governance structure and subsequent monitoring. However, the resultant information is duly recorded in the programme specification which also sets out the respective number of core courses and elective courses to be studied.

1.17 The School's Academic Regulations specify the required content of course outlines, and its Course Outline Guidance includes the overt requirement for assessment to be directly linked to learning outcomes. Course outlines include, among other information, staff biographies, a course summary, the course format and structure, prerequisite/related courses, course preparation/reading material and teaching methods. Subject Benchmark Statements are taken into account at programme level only, not course level.

1.18 Course outlines also set out detailed assessment arrangements, including an assessment table, minimum requirements to pass, an overview of the various assessment elements and their proportion of the overall assessment volume, any ungraded elements and a statement on the relationship between assessment and learning outcomes and on the detection of plagiarism.

1.19 The sample course outlines, both core and elective, seen by the team are mostly consistent with the School's required content but do suggest a high proportion of cut and paste from a model. The team also considered two sample learning outcome matrices, signed off by the Programme Director and Faculty Advisor, which the School contended were evidence that constituent course learning outcomes are mapped against their respective programme learning outcomes.

1.20 As already reported, the School does not award credit in accordance with a UK credit framework but operates a simple internal framework, assigning credit value from 0.5 to 1.5 according to the length of the course, with the credit weighting to be included in the information within the course outline. In response to queries from the team, the School advised that the equation underlying the current calculation of credit was 1.0 credit for 10 teaching sessions of approximately 27.5 teaching hours. However, additionally, the School informed the team that it intends to carry out a credit framework investigation at the end of 2014.

1.21 The review team discussed programme specifications and course outlines with faculty, staff and students. Students reported these to be clear and to offer sufficient information, for example on assessment for their needs. Indeed, they overtly stated that they are satisfied that they are able as students to use the information to confirm to themselves that assessments undertaken related to learning outcomes. The team's view from its own consideration of course outlines (with regard to the transparency of assessment of learning outcomes and assessment criteria for class contribution) is different, as set out in section A3.2. Students also reported that the School's internal credit system is broadly understood and, subject to the students' level of pre-knowledge of the topic area, is consistent with regard to the expected and actual volume of study required on a course.

1.22 The sample transcripts and sample certificates seen by the team suggest that the School uses the appropriate programme specification as the definitive source for the provision of formal records of study.

1.23 The review team concludes that, overall, the School's maintenance of a definitive record of each programme and qualification it approves meets Expectation A2 of the Quality Code 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

1.24 The School's Programme Approval Procedure requires referral to the FHEQ for programme design. At the programme approval panel stage of the procedure, if the programme specification template requires alignment with the appropriate FHEQ level (always Level 7), the external assessor and the Faculty Advisor report to the panel on alignment with the FHEQ, although that responsibility is not explicit in the job description for the Faculty Advisor.

1.25 The School's Academic Regulations state that programmes are designed and monitored with reference to the FHEQ Levels 7 and 8, although the School's MPhil/PhD Regulations make no such mention. The School states its confidence that its MPhil/PhD programme and its assessment align with Level 8 of the FHEQ but the confirmatory mechanisms it cites to evidence this relate only to taught programmes.

1.26 The School advises that the *Master's Degree Characteristics*, published by QAA, is used as a reference document by the Head of Quality Assurance but is not formally referenced or significantly used in the School. The School argues that its content is similar to that of the Subject Benchmark Statement for master's degrees in business and management, which covers all the School's taught programmes and dictates not just general characteristics but also the characteristics of the 'type' of programme. To improve understanding of QAA guidance within the School, it is viewed as more straightforward to keep focus aimed at the FHEQ and the Subject Benchmark Statement.

1.27 The Programme Approval Procedure does indeed require referral to that Subject Benchmark Statement. Again, the external assessor reports to the programme approval panel on alignment with the Subject Benchmark Statement and the programme specification template requires alignment with it. The Academic Regulations also state that programmes are to be measured against the Subject Benchmark Statement.

1.28 The Programme Approval Procedure requires internal reference points to be consulted in programme design but those reference points are not explicitly cited. However, they are implicitly considered via the external assessor's report to the programme approval panel, which includes how the proposed programme encompasses comprehensive learning outcomes which match the stated aims, teaching and learning methods, appropriate assessment arrangements, appropriate academic content in relation to the programme aims, programme structure and skills and employability. The programme approval panel also considers the academic case, which includes a draft programme specification and draft course outlines, which are required to ensure that assessment tests the intended learning outcomes, and, if required, draft programme regulations.

1.29 The School uses a programme review process every five or six years for each programme to reaffirm that UK threshold academic standards and its own academic standards continue to be met.

1.30 In response to queries from the review team, the School stated that a draft programme modification procedure was due to be discussed in the next academic session but that Programme Officers are informally involved following a process similar to what is proposed in the draft procedure. The draft intends a formalisation of a currently informal process and is predicated on the identification of changes at major or minor level and consequently either requiring approval at Management Board or not. The draft procedure provides for senior staff to offer guidance on major or minor status and for students to be duly consulted and informed. The draft procedure does not set a quantum or trigger which would result in a whole programme review as a result of incremental course changes. However, the draft procedure does identify the need to ensure that a particular change 'does not affect the overall expected learning outcomes or nature of the programme and that the programme remains appropriate in terms of the QAA standards and expectations and the School's vision and expectations'.

1.31 While the draft procedure would formalise the process for changes to core courses, the School already operates an Elective Planning Group which has delegated authority from Management Board to approve elective courses, including the responsibility to review a Faculty Advisor's approval of an exemption from the School's Assessment Regulations. The Elective Planning Group has approved 12 electives at seven meetings since its establishment but none since 2013 and has now had Management Board approval of its Guiding Principles for the 2014-15 Elective Portfolio.

1.32 Elective Portfolio Group's discussions have focused particularly on the resourcing of electives, the equity of extending elective choice across all the School's programmes and the implications and difficulties consequently arising in terms of such practicalities as timetabling. In terms of its remit to quality assure elective courses, it has been somewhat slow to act. In November 2013 the report of the Faculty Advisor (Electives) highlighted some student concerns at the lack of academic rigour. The Faculty Advisor (Electives) was to review all course outlines and 'with evidence from the Degree Programme Office conduct a more detailed exploration, with support of externals and subject areas, of specific electives where there may be rigour issues' and report to the Group.

1.33 In March 2014, the Faculty Advisor (Electives) was reported to be reviewing all elective course outlines to ensure that learning outcomes are appropriate and aligned with assessments and that assessments comply with School policy and the appropriate Subject Benchmark Statement. He was also checking consistency across multiple streams to ensure that there was indeed consistency of content of elective courses to show differentiation. The same meeting was also briefed by the Faculty Advisor (Electives) on the need to address staff concerns at the revised elective course outline template to explain its purpose and that 'students needed to have adequate and comparable information regarding learning outcomes'.

1.34 By July 2014 and the Faculty Advisor (Electives) Annual Report, this quality allowance activity was still a work in progress. The Faculty Advisor (Electives) gave a detailed exposition of how the approval of elective course outlines and the monitoring of the delivery of elective courses might address student concerns with regard to lack of rigour in academic standards. The Elective Planning Group noted that some elective course outlines had yet to be provided by non-respondents to the review, which would then move into the stage of consultation with subject areas.

1.35 The Faculty Advisor (Electives) had advised the Elective Planning Group that more detail was required in course outlines, especially to ensure strong connection between expected learning outcomes and assessment methods. The Faculty Advisor (Electives) also advised the Elective Planning Group that feedback and other data sources would have to be more closely scrutinised to target specific elective courses for a 'rigour review' involving

focused investigation of curricula and (teaching and learning) methods and that externals and subject areas would be engaged as appropriate. In effect, this repeated the intention voiced in November 2013. Elective Planning Group's minute in response to that report from the Faculty Advisor (Electives) was, however, just to record that the Chair noted that there had been communication issues raised by staff at the need for revision of the elective course outlines for the current year and staff concern expressed at the way the process of revised elective course outlines had been managed.

1.36 The review team considered the School's programme approval procedure but as no new programme approval has taken place since 2008, had no opportunity to see it evidenced in operation. The team discussed the approval of core and elective courses with senior faculty in the context of the School's promotion of research-informed teaching and confirmed the separate mechanisms for core and elective course approval. The team also learnt that all newly approved elective courses are automatically but retrospectively included in the sample of elective courses to be reviewed by external examiners at the end of the academic session.

1.37 Again, as the programme amendment procedure is still only in draft, the team had no opportunity to see the approval of new core courses evidenced in operation. However, the team **affirms** the formalising of programme amendment procedures for core course outlines. The School should progress and conclude the formalising of programme amendment procedures for core course outlines, drawing on the Quality Code as well as practice elsewhere in the sector, to ensure safeguards against the impact of incremental course changes on the original programme.

1.38 The team did consider in detail the Elective Planning Group's approval of new elective courses and, while recognising the Group's efforts, shares with the Group the view that more could be done to standardise elective course outlines so that the approval process could demonstrate how academic standards are ensured through that approval mechanism. Elective Planning Group has itself identified this as an issue which should be concluded as soon as possible.

1.39 The review team concludes that, overall, the School's implementation of processes for the approval of programmes and the ensuring of academic standards meets Expectation A3 of the Quality Code and the 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

1.40 One of the key purposes of the School's programme approval procedure is to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are clearly stated.

1.41 The procedure includes checking that there are comprehensive learning outcomes matching the stated aims and that there are appropriate assessment arrangements. The standard documentation set includes the draft programme specification and completed course templates. The programme specification template and course outline guidance require learning outcomes to be articulated.

1.42 The Academic Regulations set out a common set of principles for assessment, with which all summative course assessments must be consistent. These principles include requirements for a clear link between learning outcomes and assessment.

1.43 The School applies a grading curve to grade both individual courses and the overall programme. In individual core courses, students ranked within the bottom 10 per cent receive either a 'C' grade (a pass) or an 'F' grade (a fail). The remaining 90 per cent of students are ranked proportionately: 10 per cent receiving an A+ grade, 40 per cent receiving A and 40 per cent receiving B. Departure from 'strict proportionality' of +/-2 per cent is permitted where two or more students have the same numerical grade. Similar methodology is applied to elective courses.

1.44 The Academic Regulations set a 50 per cent pass mark for all courses, and state that 'failure is absolute'. The Academic Regulations provide that to be eligible for the master's award, students must pass the minimum requirements set out in the relevant programme specification. In addition to general requirements, the programme specifications stipulate that students must pass all courses.

1.45 The School does not have grade descriptors, as it deems that the use of a grading curve renders grade descriptors unnecessary. Consequently, there are no School-wide descriptors to distinguish 'pass' and 'fail'. However, senior and academic staff emphasised that students must demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes to pass a course. There are detailed marking criteria for individual assessments and marking is moderated.

1.46 A degree is awarded with distinction to the top 10 per cent of the class, following conversion of course letter grades to numerical grades.

1.47 Discussions about the replacement of the grading curve system by 'standardised grading' are currently taking place within the School, notably in the Assessment Policy Committee and Faculty Advisors Group.

1.48 The Academic Regulations provide, where appropriate, for special arrangements to be made for students with a declared disability.

1.49 The School requires checks that there are comprehensive learning outcomes which match the stated aims and that there are appropriate assessment arrangements.

1.50 While the School does not have grade descriptors, testing of the learning outcomes in assessment, together with detailed marking criteria for individual assessments and moderation of marking within course teams, provide a system for ensuring that the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment and that UK threshold standards are satisfied.

1.51 The review team concludes that the School's processes allow Expectation A3.2 to be met.

1.52 The review team scrutinised the School's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in the Academic Regulations, policy documentation, minutes of meetings, external examiner reports, programme and course documentation, and meetings with academic and support staff and students.

1.53 The most recent programme approval within the scope of this review, for the Masters in Management, occurred in 2008, before the adoption of the current programme approval procedure. The available programme approval documentation confirms that a formal programme specification aligning with QAA guidelines and with the programme specifications for the School's other programmes is in place.

1.54 Brief course outlines were provided with the approval documentation. Some, but not all, incorporate learning outcomes, though without sight of the programme specification prepared for the approval, the review team was unable to determine whether these course learning outcomes aligned with the programme learning outcomes or whether the programme design ensured that all programme learning outcomes were addressed through the courses.

1.55 Currently, the School has in place programme specifications for all its master's programmes. These are the definitive documents that outline the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected achievement at programme level. Each sets out a very extensive list of intended learning outcomes.

1.56 The School maps programme learning outcomes against courses. The relevant matrices record that the courses making up the programmes collectively address all the programme learning outcomes.

1.57 However, course outlines do not always accurately reflect the information set out in the mapping, some setting out fewer or different learning outcomes, or none at all. The most recent annual monitoring report for the elective courses identifies a need for more detail in elective course outlines to ensure that there is a strong connection between learning outcomes and assessment methods. Following this analysis, the review team **recommends** that the School ensures alignment between course learning outcomes, as set out in course outlines, and programme learning outcomes (by May 2015).

1.58 The review team viewed an extensive range of external examiner reports for the master's programmes. Without exception, these reports confirm that the standards set are appropriate for the award; assessments are appropriate for the subject, students, level of study and expected outcomes; and academic standards and achievement of students are comparable across courses within the same programme/subject area, across other institutions and across previous cohorts. Reports confirm that assessment criteria, marking

schemes and arrangements for classification are set at an appropriate level. Students have a clear understanding of what is required to pass a course.

1.59 The Disability Support Officer works with the student to agree a 'Summary of Needs' document forming the basis of any special arrangements required.

1.60 The review team concludes that, overall, Expectation A3 is met both in design and operation and the associated risk level is moderate.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

1.61 The School does not have a written programme monitoring procedure, regarding annual monitoring as 'business as usual'. As a matter of practice, formal annual reporting on core courses and programmes as a whole operates through annual Faculty Advisor Reports. The portfolio of elective courses is monitored separately by the Faculty Advisor (Electives).

1.62 The Faculty Advisor Report template requires reports to be completed with reference to core course outlines, external examiner reports, the previous Faculty Advisor Report and action points, FHEQ and the Subject Benchmark Statements published by QAA.

1.63 The template requires Faculty Advisors to confirm, in respect of each core course within the programme, whether: the course's stated aims and intended learning outcomes remain appropriate; the course is effective in meeting its stated aims and learning outcomes; the assessment instruments selected remain appropriate; the assessment strategy remains appropriate for a variety of learners; and the course overall is of 'M'-level standard. The template also requires Faculty Advisors to provide comments on and set out actions arising from external examiner reports.

1.64 While the template does not explicitly require reference to the programme specification, it requires comment on the health of the programme overall; assessment of the cumulative effect of any development or wider changes within the programme or School; and evaluation of the programme against the Subject Benchmark Statement and the FHEQ. The template does not require or prompt the presentation or analysis of completion/achievement data.

1.65 The Faculty Advisor job description states that Faculty Advisors work with Programme Directors, the Associate Dean (Degree Programmes) and the Deputy Dean (Programmes) to ensure that recommended changes are implemented and reported to Management Board annually. However, as noted above, there is no School-wide document setting out the annual monitoring process. The School states that Faculty Advisor Reports are considered at Management Board, as part of the Degree Programmes Office annual report, and 'have been considered' at programme-level committees. Programme Directors indicated that the reports are considered by the Associate Dean and Deputy Dean (Programmes), Executive Committee and Assessment Policy Committee; and that the Electives Planning Group considers the Faculty Advisor (Electives) Report. The reports are presented at Faculty Advisors Group.

1.66 The School is reviewing annual programme monitoring and a proposed process is in place for consideration, approval and implementation in 2014-15.

1.67 Programme review is a three-stage process undertaken at least every six years for each degree programme by an Internal Review Group, a Final Review Group (each of which produces a review report) and an Implementation Committee (set up to oversee implementation of the approved programme enhancements).

1.68 The stated aims of the procedure include ensuring that the standards of the School's awards are in line with its aspirations for excellence and meet the requirements of external agencies, such as QAA and the School's accrediting bodies; and that the programme remains aligned with the relevant FHEQ qualification descriptor and the Subject Benchmark Statement.

1.69 The Internal Review Group, which does not include external membership, is required to provide comprehensive analysis of the programme. The documentation set to be provided with the report to the Final Review Group includes the programme specification, reference to external examiners' reports, data analysis against competitors, the national Subject Benchmark Statement and the FHEQ.

1.70 The process requires the Final Review Group, which must include student representation and at least two external members, one from a peer academic institution and one from industry, to report on a range of matters, including suggested revisions to the programme specification, the continuing validity of the programme, recommendations to remedy shortcomings, and its conclusions on standards. This stage of the process includes meetings with faculty, staff and students.

1.71 Under the documented procedure, the Internal Review Report and, subsequently, the Final Review Report are presented to Management Board, which must approve the Final Review Group's recommendations before implementation can begin.

1.72 Following Management Board approval of the Final Review Group's report and recommendations, an Implementation Committee, chaired by a senior member of staff within the School and including student representation, is set up. The committee is required to report progress to Management Board.

1.73 Although the programme monitoring process is not in written form, the process which the School intends and expects to be in operation, through the Faculty Advisors' annual programme reports, is potentially effective in providing assurance at programme level that core courses and programmes as a whole are delivered in accordance with what was approved, that academic currency is subsequently maintained and that programmes continue to meet UK threshold academic standards and comply with the School's academic framework and regulations, though the process does not incorporate the use of data to monitor academic standards.

1.74 In the absence of a School-wide document setting out the programme monitoring process, the School's processes are not sufficiently clear and robust to ensure annual institutional oversight of academic currency and academic standards. As noted above, the School acknowledges that annual reporting and oversight could be improved and made more explicit and states that the system is under review.

1.75 From its scrutiny of these processes and procedures, the review team concludes that the School's process for monitoring programmes is not sufficiently clear and robust to allow Expectation A3.3 to be met. From its scrutiny of the processes and procedures applied in Periodic Programme Review, the team concludes that the processes of programme review ensure achievement of academic standards and contribute sufficiently to meeting Expectation A3.3.

1.76 The review team scrutinised the University's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of meetings, programme and module documentation and by meeting staff.

1.77 Faculty Advisors produce annual review reports, within the School's reporting template, for each of the master's programmes, with isolated exceptions concerning

assessment instruments in two core courses, which have been addressed. Faculty Advisors' Annual Reports confirm that course stated aims and intended learning outcomes remain appropriate; courses are effective in meeting aims and learning outcomes; assessment strategy and instruments remain appropriate; and courses overall are of master's-level standard.

1.78 As for the programme as a whole, the reports confirm that curriculum content is relevant to the intended learning outcomes; programmes meet the criteria specified in the Subject Benchmark Statement; and students are working at master's level. The reports include consideration of matters arising from external examiner reports and record School responses to external examiner comment. Completion/achievement data are not presented or analysed in the reports.

1.79 A single Faculty Advisor (Electives) Overview Report is produced annually; exceptionally, no report was produced in 2012-13, when the elective courses were undergoing periodic review. The 2013-14 report records that standards set in terms of learning objectives and outcomes, as framed in curricula and assessment regimes, are scrutinised annually. The report also states that, while external examiner comment is overwhelmingly favourable, there is room for improvement and there are plans to 'sharpen' the review of electives.

1.80 As noted above, the School states that Faculty Advisor Reports are considered at Management Board, as part of the Degree Programmes Office (DPO) annual report, and 'have been considered at programme level committees'.

1.81 The DPO Report 2013, which was considered by Management Board, provides a summary of the Faculty Advisor programme evaluations for 2012-13 and reports that Faculty Advisors were satisfied that programmes meet QAA requirements and remain relevant to the stated learning outcomes. Minutes of an MBA Curriculum Committee held in May 2012 refer to the relevant Faculty Advisor Report as an 'item to note.' While no DPO report was produced in 2014, the School has indicated that Faculty Advisor Reports will in future be considered by Management Board as part of a specific Faculty Advisor Report update.

1.82 As noted above, the School is reviewing annual monitoring and a proposed process is in place for consideration, approval and implementation in 2014-15. The review team concurs with the School's view that annual reporting and oversight could be improved and **recommends** that the School expedite the review of programme monitoring and establish a system which is clearly documented, incorporates robust School oversight and is implemented effectively (by July 2015).

1.83 Internal Programme Review Groups take note of the FHEQ. Reports express confidence that, as demonstrated in the programme specification, students are educated with reference to the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7. Consideration of Subject Benchmark Statements is generally apparent.

1.84 Reports identify assessment issues arising from external examiner reports, including concerns about the assessment of class participation, take-home examinations, compressed grading ranges and the quality of feedback to students.

1.85 The Final Review Report on the Elective Portfolio considers and makes recommendations on standards issues, and the review team found that resulting actions are subsequently monitored by the Implementation Committee.

1.86 However, despite requests in Internal Review Reports produced in 2010 and 2011 that assessment issues, arising primarily from external examiner reports, be 'fully reviewed

and assessed within the context of the review', the associated Final Review Reports do not confirm that the groups addressed these matters.

1.87 For these reasons the team **recommends** under B8 that the School reviews the scope, extent and consistency of reporting by final programme review groups to ensure that the rigorous scrutiny of outcomes of the internal review stage is explicitly required and clearly documented (by July 2015).

1.88 Internal Review Reports and Final Review Group Reports are considered by Management Board; the work of Implementation Committees is formally recorded; and Management Board receives review updates.

1.89 The review team concludes that, overall, Expectation A3 is not met and the associated risk level is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

1.90 The School describes itself as operating in a global marketplace and defines its competitors as the top US and European business schools. Consequently, it pays attention to external rankings and to evaluations of its programmes of study by external professional bodies, particularly the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), The Association of MBAs (AMBA) and the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS). The School uses external advisers from both academe and business and industry at all points where academic standards are set or assessed. External examiners are used to confirm the standards achieved by students awarded degrees by the School and external advisers are used in the approval and periodic review of programmes of study.

1.91 The School's use of externals in programme approval and review is described in its Programme Approval Procedure and its use of external examiners in its Academic Regulations, both of which are overseen by the Management Board. In addition, the School is in the process of adjusting and enhancing its system of annual programme monitoring. Together, these procedures allow the School to meet Expectation A3.4 of the Quality Code.

1.92 The review team read the recent accreditation reports of external professional bodies, recent internal review group documents and the reports of external examiners. The team also met members of staff and faculty responsible for collecting and responding to the views of external advisers and examiners.

1.93 The School was re-accredited by both EQUIS and AMBA during 2014 after visits by international peer review teams which addressed programme design, assessment procedures and standards. The School has responded to recommendations, following an institutional audit in 2008, to ensure external oversight of assessment by collaborative partners, and to use external examiners in the assessment of elective courses.

1.94 The programme Final Review Group reports demonstrate that external advisers consider the standards of awards and their alignment with the FHEQ and the Subject Benchmark Statement, while the reports of the external examiners addressed standards set and achieved and confirm that the assessment procedures required by the School's regulations have been properly adhered to. It is the view of the team that appropriate external and independent expertise is used to ensure that UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and maintained.

1.95 The review team concludes that, overall, Expectation A3 is met both in design and operation and the associated risk level is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.96 In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. All but one of the Expectations for this judgement area are met. The associated levels of risk of three Expectations are moderate and four are low.

1.97 There are no features of good practice and one affirmation, which refers to the formalising of programme amendment procedures for core course outlines.

1.98 The review team makes two recommendations. One is against an Expectation with low risk, which requires the School to ensure alignment between course learning outcomes, as set out in course outlines, and programme learning outcomes. Another is against the unmet recommendation with moderate risk. This is to expedite the review of programme monitoring and establish a system which is clearly documented, incorporates robust School oversight and is implemented effectively. This reflects the team's view that the School's process for monitoring programmes is not sufficiently clear and robust to allow Expectation A3.3 to be met.

1.99 The review team concludes that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards **meet** 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 and Approval

Findings

2.1 The School operates a three-stage programme approval procedure (approval in principle; programme approval panel and Management Board approval) with strategic oversight by Management Board. The design and approval of a new programme would be a significant strategic initiative of high visibility.

2.2 The procedure clearly sets out its purpose and references the FHEQ and the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement. The procedure itself is transparent and simply worded, but does not have detailed supporting pro formas to facilitate the ready provision of relevant information, partly as no new accredited programme approval has taken place at the School since 2008.

2.3 The approval in principle stage requires a rationale for the programme, but the supporting data requirements are basic, effectively just headings. The programme approval panel is offered basic criteria which underpin programme design but these criteria are not articulated beyond headings. The procedure is silent on how programme design would ensure inclusivity so as to take account of students with protected characteristics. However, by means of the programme specification considered under the procedure, the School is able to consider how assessment on the programme enables the demonstration of learning outcomes and how the programme is organised and structured to achieve the learning outcomes.

2.4 The procedure differentiates the business case from the academic case and offers clear loci of responsibility and attribution of specific roles, including to the Deputy Dean (Programmes) as Chair of the programme approval panel, the Head of Quality Assurance, students (the Student Association Executive Committee also reported student involvement in programme design and approval), an indicative list of other internal stakeholders and an external adviser, who must not be a recent or current external examiner and who is often a prominent lead practitioner in the field.

2.5 The School relies on general external evidence to review the effectiveness of its procedure, citing student employment reports; alumni profiles; programme rankings (such as in financial and business media); and accreditation reports (such as by EQUIS and AMBA).

2.6 The programme approval procedure would also apply to the approval of new collaborative programmes with an additional process to ensure an appropriate level of due diligence in approving the collaborative partner.

2.7 The procedure does not explicitly set out how good practice in programme design and approval would be captured and shared across the School. Again, this may be a function of the rarity of the procedure's use. Similarly, there is no indication what information or resource, other than the availability of the procedure itself, or what support might be made available to a new programme design team. Nor does the procedure set out, beyond the

rationale and the qualitative and quantitative data, such as market research and other organisational information, the standard requirements of that procedure.

2.8 The procedure sets the approved programme specification as the definitive record and reference point for staff and students. Programmes are required to be revised periodically every six years although this is cited as a five-year programme review cycle in the detail of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

2.9 The review team had limited scope to test the effectiveness of the procedure which postdates the approval of all the School's programmes. However, as proxy evidence, the School provided the team with documentation relating to a similar initiative, not within the scope of the current review, with the University of Fudan, China. Again the qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the Management Board's final approval of the initiative were bespoke to the particular initiative rather than drawn from any standard requirements.

2.10 The team confirmed with staff that the procedure provided no detailed guidance on the qualitative and quantitative data required for a programme's approval but was advised that the Head of Quality Assurance would provide bespoke guidance as required. The team also confirmed that the procedure does not advise on taking account prospectively of students with protected characteristics in the programme design. However, programme teams, with advice from the School's Disability Officer, learn from the admission of students with protected characteristics to adjust programmes appropriately on an ongoing basis.

2.11 Overall, the team concludes that the design and operation of process for the design, development and approval of programmes met Expectation B1 of the Quality Code and the 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

Findings

2.12 On the advice of the Management Board, the School's Governing Body sets admissions policies and procedures. A publicly available admissions policy is formally reviewed by the Management Board, but also informally after each intake. The School's Admissions policy effectively outlines the principles of admissions, what candidates can expect from the School, supporting documentation requirements and support paths. The School's Academic Regulations provide clear statements about the duty to provide accurate information, meeting offer conditions, and enrolment status. The School's partners must operate fair application procedures approved by the School, and in the case of partnerships with Hong Kong University and Columbia University, programme entry requirements and decisions must be agreed by all three institutions through the Collaborative Provision Review Board (CPRB). Each programme's entry requirements must be set out in programme specifications, on the School's website and in other marketing materials. The admissions policy incorporates a clearly defined complaints and appeals process.

2.13 Admission onto master's programmes is overseen and approved by programme-level admissions committees, whose membership includes Senior Admissions Managers, programme representatives and careers staff. If shortlisted, prospective students attend an interview with either the admissions team or an alumnus, a system that allows the School to conduct extended interviews globally. Recommendations are made to the Admissions Manager before the Admissions Committee makes final decisions based on entry requirements, candidates' career aspirations' fit with the programme, and their ability to meet the award's academic standards. Prospective students can make a complaint about the interview process if necessary. The PhD Committee oversees applications for doctoral degrees, and membership includes representatives from each of the School's subject areas. Doctoral candidates are interviewed in person or via teleconference. Candidates are sent terms and conditions, or further information if a programme changes significantly after their application.

2.14 At programme level, admissions staff seek a balanced intake in terms of background, gender, ethnicity and nationality. The School publishes an annual Diversity Report, which evaluates its performance, sets objectives and scrutinises equality and diversity data regarding admissions. The Diversity Working Group, which consists of a representative from each department as well as a student representative and reports to Management Board, develops the Diversity Strategy and drives efforts to increase diversity within the School.

2.15 An annual review of procedures ensures any changes necessary to enhance applicants' experiences are considered and implemented. This formal review is supported by ongoing informal reviews which incorporate feedback from an admissions survey. The School's admissions policies and procedures are consistent with the Quality Code Expectation B2.

2.16 The review team analysed a range of supporting documentation and met faculty, staff and students to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures. Programme

specifications clearly state entry requirements. Programme brochures accurately summarise entry requirements and the application process. Applicants must demonstrate business experience and a range of subject-specific skills and attributes, including leadership, international awareness, languages and team skills. Contact points for support and further information are highlighted in printed brochures and online. Student handbooks and offer letters contain appropriate terms and conditions for master's and doctoral-level programmes. Students, external accreditors and previous QAA reviews of transnational education confirm that application processes operate effectively, are applied equitably across campuses, and meet requirements of PSRBs.

2.17 The School recruits students via online and print advertisements, outreach events, and over 350 recruitment events in 35 countries. A programme selector ('help me choose') and 'tell us about you' form allow prospective students to compare programmes and enable admissions staff to offer tailored advice. A range of student profiles, blogs, programme demographic breakdowns and testimonials help prospective students decide whether a programme is right for them. An informative admissions blog keeps applicants updated about key requirements and stages of the application cycle. Excellent online support is available for those unfamiliar with the GMAT test and prospective students can directly email student ambassadors. Online information sessions, one-to-one meetings, and phone and email contact allow admissions staff to guide applicants through the process. The highly comprehensive information, advice and guidance that enable applicants to make informed programme choices is **good practice**.

2.18 Interviewers are provided with training, interview questions, a presentation exercise and scoring advice. Alumni interviewers are matched with candidates based on life and industry backgrounds and are able to offer valuable first-hand experiences of studying programmes at the School.

2.19 The School prides itself on recruiting a diverse and international student body, and is seeking to redress a gender imbalance without lowering standards by holding female-only recruitment days. The Diversity Working Group regularly considers the role that admissions play in meeting the School's diversity objectives. The Annual Diversity Report sets targets for programmes to diversify their intake and the School has made progress in redressing the MBA programme's gender balance. Diversity data is used to measure the achievement of the School's equality objectives and monitor student progression.

2.20 The comprehensive admissions survey achieves a high response rate and enables collective analysis of applicants' motivations and their views on the application process, information and admissions service.

2.21 Clear and effective policies and procedures for admissions, excellent applicant information and support, and a commitment to equality and diversity combine with robust monitoring and review processes to ensure that Expectation B2 of the Quality Code is met with a low risk.

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

2.22 The School has a recently revised Learning and Teaching Strategy (May 2014) overseen by the Deputy Dean (Programmes). The Strategy outlines the three core principles that underpin the School's learning and teaching activity. The School Plan articulates how the learning and teaching strategy will be met.

2.23 The Learning and Teaching strategy articulates three key initiatives of global outlook, London location and learning technology and identifies specific key performance indicators to monitor the success of these initiatives. The five-year School Plan clearly articulates how the Learning and Teaching Strategy will be achieved, with detailed plans for the degree programmes and underpinning plans for resources, including people, estates, IT and library. An Appointments Committee oversees recruitment. High standards are required in academic recruitment and promotion in teaching, research, collegiality and academic and practitioner visibility. Faculty have access to a wide range of development programmes. The School has a large number of international academic staff and recognises the challenge of assimilating new international faculty.

2.24 The School has an Estates Masterplan which details planned expansion of facilities. This is monitored via the annual interim performance report on the School Plan. There are plans to develop the IT support through a new learning hub. The Student Disability Services Procedure covers pre-application through to learning and assessment.

2.25 Teaching evaluations from students are considered as part of the annual monitoring process with summary reports provided to the Subject Area Chair, the Deputy Dean and the Research and Faculty Office. Programme review committees assess teaching materials, assessment methods and fit with the key initiatives outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

2.26 Expectations for student engagement with learning are articulated through the School's web pages and programme operational information on the virtual learning environment. Programme handbooks give detailed information on the programme and each course (module) has a course outline which is required to provide information about learning, teaching and assessment on that course. The effectiveness of learning and teaching is evaluated by a range of student surveys. Students are supported by dedicated stream/programme managers.

2.27 To determine whether this Expectation had been met in practice, the review team tested the evidence by speaking to senior staff, programme directors, academic staff, support staff and students and their representatives, and by scrutinising relevant policies, procedures, meeting minutes and data analysis reports.

2.28 There is clear evidence of a strong strategic integrated approach to planning which leads to a well-developed planning process with support staff clearly articulating their plans to support the needs of students and academic colleagues. The integrated planning to

ensure the timely provision of a high-quality learning environment and of resources to support teaching is **good practice**.

2.29 The review team heard that academic staff feel well supported in terms of continuous professional development. They spoke of a well-developed induction process and ongoing development opportunities including one-to-one support, small groups and informal peer feedback. Some development events, such as presentation skills, were obligatory. At the end of term, faculty meet to review and share key events, issues and good practice. There is an Excellence in Teaching Award. Meeting the expectations of the standards of staff is evident in internal publicity for new arrivals and for promotions. There are strong external indicators of the quality of teaching through external examiner reports, and reports from international accrediting bodies, EQUIS and AMBA.

2.30 The Student Association annual survey reports concerns about facilities and IT infrastructure but recognises the School's strategic response to their resolution. Students that the team met reported that issues with the portal were about clarity of structure. The information they needed was all there but it could be hard to find. The range of specialist support available to students is **good practice**.

2.31 Students whom the team met and the various survey reports demonstrate that students are generally very satisfied with the quality of teaching. Students on accelerated career programmes are generally slightly less satisfied than students on Leadership programmes. In response to the survey question 'overall, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching on the programme' the average score for 2012-13 was 4.02 out of 5.00.

2.32 The review team concludes that the School has effective policies and processes in place to deliver, monitor and enhance learning and teaching. Good practice is identified in both the high level of support available to students and in the integrated planning to ensure the timely provision of a high-quality environment and of resources to support teaching. Therefore, Expectation B3 of the Quality Code 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

2.33 The School Plan underpins the School's approach to enhancement of students' academic, personal and professional potential, including improving curricula excellence and the student experience.

2.34 The School Plan includes Department Plans for those parts of the School underpinning the delivery of curricula excellence and student experience. The Learning and Teaching Strategy identifies the related key performance indicators as Faculty Advisors' Annual Reports, External Examiner Reports, Student Course Evaluation forms and Minutes of Oversight Committees. The School Plan is accompanied by a Risk Register with key related risks, mitigating actions and operational responsibilities.

2.35 Three Executive Directors are responsible for the three broad groups of programmes in the portfolio: Early Career (the Masters in Management programme), Accelerated Career (the MBA and Masters in Finance programmes) and Leadership (the Executive MBA and Sloan programmes). They are supported by five Programme Directors responsible for each individual programme, with one Programme Director stewarding both the EMBA-Global programmes and the Sloan programme.

2.36 The Executive Director (Operations) is responsible for central operations including student support services, UK Visas and Immigration compliance, course scheduling and management of assessment processes. The Executive Director (Recruitment and Admissions) coordinates recruitment, business development events and information sessions, working alongside the three programme Executive Directors and the admissions teams. The Executive Director (Careers) is responsible for the Career Services team, which markets students to global recruiters and generates opportunities for permanent positions and internships. There is also a small dedicated student activities team to support the Student Association and student clubs/conferences. The School has a Diversity Working Group responsible for monitoring and moving forward the diversity agenda within the School.

2.37 Considerable information is provided to students on development opportunities before and during study through the website, virtual learning environment and programme handbooks. The careers service also provides support to alumni and alumni are actively engaged in admissions processes. Email is also used extensively to alert students to opportunities. The majority of students are students from a variety of overseas educational cultures. Induction processes and handbooks are used to ensure students understand expectations and requirements at the School. HR policies articulated in the School Plan include a commitment to staff development for academic and support staff.

2.38 The School Plan incorporates requirements for development in learning resources to underpin teaching. Students have access to a wide range of learning resources and equivalent resources are provided for Dubai-based students. Partner institutions at Columbia University and Hong Kong University are required to replicate resources.

2.39 The review team tested the support and resourcing for students through meetings with senior, academic and support staff, and with students and their representatives, and by scrutinising documents.

2.40 There is clear evidence of excellent integration to ensure the provision of a high-quality learning environment and of resources to support teaching. This is **good practice**. Students told the team they are well resourced and that the School is responsive to requests for additional resources.

2.41 Prior to admission, programmes provide support by way of buddy schemes with current students, English language lessons, webinars and monthly bulletins. Survey results confirm that there is plenty of opportunity for contact with the School prior to admission.

2.42 All programmes meet one-to-one with students who are struggling academically to discuss support the students may need. In addition, all students have access to the School Counsellor and the Disability Office. Monitoring statistics show that around 5 per cent of students have used the personal counselling service.

2.43 Many courses contain skills development opportunities which are seen as key programme components. Faculty Advisors monitor this in their annual review of courses. There is a programme of additional activities for both taught and MPhil/PhD students to further develop skills. Programmes include additional formative pass/fail units. There are considerable opportunities for students to engage with business and develop their employability, for example the London Finance Experience for the Masters in Finance and the Leadership Launch course on the MBA.

2.44 There is evidence of many opportunities for students to contact alumni. The Careers Service is very well resourced and support for students to find employment is a key part of the strategy for both taught programmes and the MPhil/PhD. There is also an alumni career service. Employment success is a key tool in recruitment. The high level of support available to students is **good practice**.

2.45 The review team concludes that the School effectively allocates resources and supports students to reach their potential. The School responds to student feedback and good practice is identified in the extensive support for students to develop their careers at both master's and PhD level, including employer involvement. Expectation B4 of the Quality Code is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.46 Students are engaged with quality assurance and enhancement both directly and through the London Business School Student Association (SA). The SA has a comprehensive constitution outlining roles, elections and responsibilities. Thirty elected students from across the provision sit on the SA's Executive Committee, whose members have regular contact with Deputy Deans and Directors across the School. The SA President has membership of the Governing Body and they and other officers participate in many of the School's committees. For example, Academic and Ethics Representatives attend Faculty Board. Students are invited to Deans and Directors (Teaching) meetings, the Health, Safety and Environment Committee, and will shortly become members of the Assessment Policy Committee. Each programme has Academic and Careers Representatives, and some also appoint Social and Commuter Representatives. Programme Representatives are members of internal, final and implementation Programme Review panels. Students also sit on Programme Approval panels, although no new programme within the scope of this review has yet been approved under this process. Similarly, draft guidance for programme amendment asks faculty to engage with students regarding modifications. The SA and Student Activities Team run a series of awards to recognise engagement with these structures.

2.47 A wide range of student surveys provide the School with feedback on its provision. 'Exit' or 'End of year' survey data is captured at a School level and is used by the Degree Programmes Office to produce an overarching report, but results are also broken down for each programme so that Programme Directors can plan accordingly. In addition, the SA runs an annual survey and the School also surveys its alumni. At programme level, a termly 'pulse check' surveys first-year MBA students and is the subject of detailed analysis. In addition, an orientation feedback survey asks students to evaluate aspects of their induction, while other surveys evaluate programme-specific elements, such as the London Business Experience, Practitioner Courses or Skills Sessions. Moreover, on completion, each course is evaluated by students through paper-based surveys, the results of which feed into faculty appraisals. Although doctoral students participate in the SA survey and course evaluations for the taught elements of their programme, there is no discrete research student survey and the School does not participate in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

2.48 Many of the School's committees, such as CPRB, include scrutiny of student feedback in their terms of reference. For example, overarching results from the annual Exit and End of year surveys are considered at Deans and Directors (Operations), Deans and Directors (Teaching) and the Executive Director Strategy meetings. Each programme produces an action plan in response to survey data and these are collated into a thematic set of actions with assigned responsibilities. The School uses external consultants and PSRB reports to assure itself its student engagement and feedback mechanisms operate effectively. In combination, the School's representative structures, opportunities for engagement with quality assurance, and range of feedback mechanisms align with the Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*.

2.49 To test the effectiveness of these systems in operation, the team talked to students, their representatives, faculty and staff, while scrutinising the School's use of, and responsiveness to, student feedback. In general, students are effectively engaged with quality assurance, whether through the Student Association Strategy Team's presentations

to senior management or representatives' direct involvement in many Programme Reviews or enhancement projects. The School's 2009 Quality Assurance and Engagement Strategy contained only a narrow conception of student engagement in quality assurance, but the ongoing review of this strategy has introduced a definition that reflects the broader engagement described above. Faculty and staff are responsive to issues raised by student representatives. External examiner reports and committee minutes are available via a portal, although students have variable awareness of these. SA officers and representatives can receive training, but the team was unable to determine how many representatives took advantage of this.

2.50 Through the surveys described above, the School gathers detailed feedback on its provision, which it closely scrutinises to effectively monitor trends over time, set targets and plan actions. Annual action planning and overarching reporting are detailed and relate data to other quality assurance activity and targets. Detailed action planning by thematic areas (assessment, careers) assigns responsibilities and target completion deadlines. Survey data is used in Programme Reviews and can lead to recommendations, but also feeds into resource planning. While students are not necessarily aware of actions taken as a result, course evaluations are effectively monitored and used to inform provision and action planning, particularly regarding electives. The School evaluates the effectiveness of its feedback gathering systems. In particular, it considered replacing paper-based surveys with online versions, but found this reduced the response rate. Overall, the School is responsive to students' feedback and has made changes to its provision as a result. For example, in response to feedback, MBA and MIF students' choice of electives was increased and the School acted on doctoral students' requests for funding and IT resources.

2.51 The effective operation of representative systems, student involvement in quality assurance processes and forums, and the scrupulous use of feedback, particularly at master's level, ensure that Expectation B5 of the Quality Code is met and the 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

2.52 The programmes and courses taught at the School are assessed in a wide variety of ways that include formal unseen examinations and tests, take-home assessment, coursework assessment, essays, case studies and simulations, multiple-choice questions, evaluations of class contribution and participation in group activities, and forms of experiential credit accumulation. Individual course teachers have significant discretion to vary the mode of assessment depending on the particular knowledge, skills and learning outcomes that have been addressed. The combinations of assessment experienced by a particular student can vary within a programme depending on the courses they have elected to study and the 'streams' they have been allocated to. The School justifies this variety and flexibility of assessment in terms of the necessary complexity of its programmes, the need for students to demonstrate their potential in numerous ways, and the teaching styles of its diverse and international faculty. The School employs a grading curve mechanism to decide final grades in most of its programmes. This method means that a student's grade depends on their overall relative position within a class.

2.53 The School provides eight programmes which lead to the award of degrees aligned with the FHEQ: six taught master's degrees which are informed by the Subject Benchmark Statement for master's degrees in business and management, published by QAA, and two linked research awards, the MRes and the PhD. The policies and procedures that govern the assessment of students for these degrees are contained in the Academic Regulations and in the MRes and PhD programme regulations. These regulations set out the broad principles and practices used to manage the design and delivery of expected learning outcomes and their assessment, the award of credit, grading procedures, the use and weighting of different forms of assessment, and the roles of boards of examiners, including external examiners. Greater detail on the range of assessment methods that may be used is set out in programme specifications and course outlines. The School has a separate policy for the assessment of class contribution, which is appended to the Academic Regulations.

2.54 Taken together, the Academic Regulations, the guidance provided to staff on designing assessment, programme specifications and course outlines provide a comprehensive if complex framework for the operation of processes of assessment, both within the School and for using assessments conducted by partner institutions. The School has in place an infrastructure of assessment policies and practices that allow it to comply with relevant parts of the Quality Code (Chapters B6, B10 and B11).

2.55 The review team examined a wide range of documents describing assessment principles and practice, including regulations, programme specifications and course outlines, external examiners' reports, the minutes of examination boards and the consideration of reports and data on assessment and progression by responsible committees, particularly the Assessment Policy Committee (APC) and the Management Board (MB). The team also discussed the management of assessment with members of faculty, relevant administrative staff and students.

2.56 The evidence seen and heard by the review team indicates that assessment requirements and processes are well understood by students and staff. External examiners' reports generally comment favourably on the management of assessment and the determination of awards. Examination Boards appear to operate properly: there is significant discussion of individual candidates and overall comments on the performance of a programme with external examiners in attendance. APC minutes demonstrate systematic and detailed consideration of matters raised by external examiners and others involved in assessment.

2.57 Faculty do not receive specific training in assessment, but are supported in the design and management of assessment by guidance in programme specifications, in the course outline template and guidance and in the Central Services Process Guide to Assessment. From September 2014 the faculty induction will include a dedicated section on 'preparing to teach' which will include an overview of assessment rules and regulation. The Course Outline guidance gives further information to staff on assessment and ensures this information is presented consistently.

2.58 Students receive advice from staff that allows them to develop a sufficient shared understanding of the principles and methods of assessment. The quality and timing of feedback on assessment, generally within six weeks, is defined by the Minimum Standards of Feedback Policy. All assessment takes place in English and appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the security of assignments and student work.

2.59 As noted above, the School applies a grading curve to grade courses. Courses in MBA, EMBA and Sloan programmes are curved by stream; courses in MiF and MiM programmes are curved by cohort.

2.60 Senior and academic staff said that there had been extensive debate within the School about the use of the grading curve; discussions concerning its replacement by 'standardised grading' are ongoing in the School, notably in the Assessment Policy Committee and Faculty Advisors Group.

2.61 Senior and academic staff justified the grading curve system as transparent and as avoiding grade inflation; students understand 'relative' performance and the marks given are less important than the ranking of marks. The application of the curve to streams is considered by the School to be fair because students in different streams (which are constructed to achieve a similar mix of ability, gender, professional experience, knowledge of English as a first language, age and nationality) may have very different learning experiences.

2.62 Students met by the team confirmed that they found the grading curve system clear and that they had no concerns about its use.

2.63 However, the application of the grading curve to streams, rather than to cohorts, for courses within the MBA, EMBA and Sloan programmes, gives rise to potential for inequity in assessment. One external examiner has expressed concern about this matter. Inequity would occur where course assessments are identical for all streams and, after application of the curve, a student from one particular stream received a lower course grade than a student from another stream, despite obtaining a higher mark. Such a circumstance could result in a student being denied the degree award with distinction, despite their total weighted course marks obtained falling within the top 10 per cent of the cohort. Moreover, as student transcripts set out grades, not marks, the absolute standard of a student's achievement at course level is not transparent, particularly for external stakeholders, including prospective employers. The review team therefore **recommends** that the School design and implement forms of grading that address the potential inequity of applying the

grading curve to streams rather than cohorts within the MBA, EMBA and Sloan programmes (by May 2015).

2.64 As indicated above, the School has a separate policy for the assessment of class contribution, which is appended to the Academic Regulations. The evidence seen by the review team shows the policy is not always adhered to in practice, posing risk in principle to the fair assessment of students.

2.65 The policy requires course outlines to set out a 'common statement' explaining the pedagogical rationale underlying this mode of assessment and emphasising the focus on the quality rather than the quantity of individual contribution. The policy also requires each course outline to include specific mention of what types of contribution will attract positive and negative grades. A number of course outlines provide very brief, general descriptions of how marks will be allocated. One external examiner, noting that he has not been asked to evaluate the allocation of marks for class contribution, had proposed that lecturers provide justification for their marks.

2.66 Students said that the assessment criteria for class participation are sometimes unclear to them and that tutor interpretation of the criteria is not always transparent. The review team **recommends** that the School takes steps to ensure that the class contribution assessment criteria are explicitly aligned to course learning outcomes and formally communicated to students (by February 2015).

2.67 The review team concludes that, while the processes of assessment operated by the School are consistent with *Chapters B6, B10 and B11* of the Quality Code in that they are valid and reliable and allow students to demonstrate achievement, there exists some risk to the equitable assessment of students because of the variable use of class participation criteria and the application of the grading curve to streams within the MBA, EMBA and Sloan programmes.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.68 The School appoints and uses external examiners for all programmes and courses leading to its awards, whether provided directly by the School or collaboratively with partners. Following a recommendation in the QAA review in 2008, clear procedures are specified for the consideration of external examiners' comments and for taking and monitoring action where appropriate.

2.69 APC appoints examiners using criteria drawn from the Quality Code, *Chapter B7*. The examiner's guide defines their role, outlines their responsibilities (including alignment of programmes to the FHEQ) and questions any evidence they should consider. External examiners are provided with key reference points (the Quality Code/FHEQ summaries) and a brief explanation of the School's committees and procedures. A range of procedures are in place to disseminate and consider external examiners' reports. They contribute to the annual Faculty Advisor reports, periodic programme reviews and APC and MB receive summaries of matters raised and actions taken. The School has in place an appropriate framework of policies and procedures that ensure that it appoints, uses and responds to external examiners in ways consistent with the Quality Code, *Chapters B7 and B10*.

2.70 The review team examined policies and regulations governing the nomination, appointment and functions of external examiners. It also read examples of external examiners' reports and the minutes of examination boards and was able to see in minutes the consideration of reports by responsible committees, particularly APC and the MB. The review team also discussed the use of external examiners with members of faculty, relevant administrative staff and students.

2.71 The regulations governing the nomination, appointment and functions of external examiners are set out in the Guidance Notes for External Examiners. These have been adopted directly from Indicator 5 in the Quality Code, *Chapter B7*. Appropriate person specification and conflicts of interest statements are in place within the policy. The appointment and use of external examiners in the assessment of doctoral students are governed by the Regulations for the degrees of MPhil and PhD and appointments are assessed and approved by the PhD committee. The appointment of all external examiners is approved by the APC. They receive a guidance pack on appointment which includes a brief outline of the role. Induction sessions are not offered but one-to-one meetings with appropriate staff are offered by the Quality Assurance Office.

2.72 Following recommendations in the 2008 QAA review report, the School strengthened the procedures for the consideration of assessment conducted on courses provided by partners. The Columbia Business School (CBS) and the University of Hong Kong (HKU) appoint the external examiners for the elements of the EMBA-Global Programmes provided by them. They adhere to the School's appointment criteria and receive the advice of the School in selecting examiners. The appointments are approved by the Collaborative Programme Review Board (CPRB) which also sees the reports from all three institutions involved in the programme.

2.73 The reports of external examiners seen by the team demonstrate that they are used appropriately to assure threshold standards, confirm the rigour and fairness of assessment processes and comment on practice relating to teaching, learning and assessment.

The reports indicate confidence in standards set by the School and include numerous positive comments on the management of learning, teaching and assessment.

2.74 The School responds to external examiners' observations quickly and comprehensively using a range of formal and informal methods, including responses to individual examiners, combined School responses that address any common issues raised, and in the Faculty Advisor Reports on each programme. APC receives each autumn an annual overview report on the comments made by external examiners. There is evidence in the minutes of APC that issues raised by external examiners, for example the use of a grading curve to allocate final marks, are discussed in detail and addressed. The outcomes of the examinations of research students are checked and signed off by the Deputy Dean (Faculty). External examiners' reports are made available to students through the Portal. However, students met by the team had not read them.

2.75 The review team concludes that the School makes scrupulous use of external examiners and that its policies and procedures for their appointment and use are consistent with *Chapters B7* and *B10* of the Quality Code. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the risk 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

2.76 As noted in paragraph 1.61, the School does not have a written programme monitoring procedure, regarding annual monitoring as 'business as usual'. The Faculty Advisor Report template requires evaluation of programmes, including comments from external examiners, with related actions; comment on progress on the previous year's action plan; comments on the health of the programme; good practice; and any future enhancement. The template prompts consideration of student feedback, changes in faculty, market or employer demands and changes in student profile.

2.77 The reports are presented at Faculty Advisors Group.

2.78 The Faculty Advisor job description states that Faculty Advisors work with Programme Directors, the Associate Dean (Degree Programmes) and the Deputy Dean (Programmes) to ensure that recommended changes are implemented and reported to Management Board annually. However, as noted above, there is no School-wide document setting out the annual monitoring process. The School states that Faculty Advisor Reports are considered at Management Board, as part of the Degree Programmes Office annual report, and 'have been considered' at programme-level committees. Programme Directors indicated that the reports are considered by the Associate Dean and Deputy Dean (Programmes), Executive Committee and Assessment Policy Committee, and that the Electives Planning Group considers the Faculty Advisor (Electives) Report.

2.79 The School is reviewing annual monitoring and a proposed process is in place for consideration, approval and implementation in 2014-15.

2.80 The programme review process is described under A3.3. Although the annual programme monitoring process is not in written form, the process the School intends and expects to be in operation, through the Faculty Advisors' annual reports, is effective in providing assurance at programme level that the School's academic provision makes appropriate learning opportunities available to students.

2.81 However, in the absence of a School-wide document setting out the programme monitoring process, the School's processes are not sufficiently clear and robust to ensure consistent effective institutional oversight of monitoring of the quality of student learning opportunities.

2.82 The School acknowledges that annual reporting and oversight could be improved and states that the system is under review.

2.83 While the School's processes for the annual monitoring of programmes need to be more explicit, they have been sufficient to ensure the quality of the student learning experience and so meet the requirements of Expectation B8. However, the School's programme review processes, particularly the use of Internal Review Reports by Final Review Groups, are insufficiently robust to allow Expectation B8 to be met.

2.84 The review team scrutinised the School's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of

meetings, external examiner reports, programme and module documentation and meetings with staff.

2.85 Faculty Advisors produce annual review reports, within the School's reporting template, for each of the master's programmes. A single Faculty Advisor (Electives) Overview Report covers the elective courses.

2.86 Typically across all programmes, in addition to the matters relating to standards set out in section A3.3, Faculty Advisor Reports provide extensive analysis of curriculum developments and record teaching and learning methodology. Many report on skills development and good practice within individual courses. Other areas are covered less extensively. In particular, student evaluation of programmes is not universally addressed. While some reports do reflect on student feedback and indicate actions taken or to be taken in response, others make no mention of student evaluation, despite the availability of quantitative and qualitative data gathered through exit and end of year/term student programme evaluation surveys. Some reports do not provide updates on the previous year's action plans and action plans for the coming year.

2.87 The Faculty Advisor (Electives) Overview Report 2013-14, which was not produced within the template, focuses on standards and on the size, structure, themes and costs of the course portfolio, with only brief references to the quality of student learning opportunities more generally.

2.88 Although the Faculty Advisor Reports are presented at Faculty Advisors Group, the recorded discussion of their content is not extensive.

2.89 As noted in paragraph 2.82, the School states that Faculty Advisor Reports are considered at Management Board, as part of the DPO annual report, and 'have been considered at programme level committees'. The DPO Report 2013 provides summaries of the Faculty Advisor programme evaluations for 2012-13, recording actions completed from the previous year and typically covering learning and teaching, assessment, skills development, experiential learning and programme enhancements.

2.90 Management Board considered the DPO annual report 2013, which provides a summary of Faculty Advisor programme evaluations for 2012-13. Minutes of an MBA Curriculum Committee held in May 2012 refer to the relevant Faculty Advisor Report as an 'item to note'. No DPO report was produced in 2014.

2.91 As noted above, the School is reviewing annual monitoring; a proposed process is in place for consideration, approval and implementation in 2014-15.

2.92 The review team concurs with the School's view that annual reporting and oversight could be improved and recommends in section A3.3 that the School expedite the review of programme monitoring and establish a system that is clearly documented, incorporates robust School oversight and is implemented effectively.

2.93 While the earlier programme review reports do not record student membership of the Internal Review Groups, more recent Internal Review Groups have included student representation. Students have not always been represented on Final Review Groups; notably, no student representation is recorded in the 2012 Masters in Finance Final Review Group report. All Final Review Group reports record external membership, representing both peer academic institutions and industry.

2.94 Internal Review reports are extensive and detailed. While not identical in structure, the reports incorporate similar content and, generally, cover the matters required by the School's programme review process. Typically, they include evaluation of developments

since the previous programme review; curriculum content and structure; teaching quality; assessment; staffing and other resources; recruitment; careers support and graduate employment; and external reports, including QAA and professional body reports. Student, staff and employer feedback is analysed and external examiner reports are appended.

2.95 The extent to which Final Review Groups draw on and are informed by the evidence contained in the Internal Review reports is unclear. Final Review reports vary considerably in both content and format. There are some common features, such as extensive, in-depth analyses of programme structure in the context of the competitive market in which the School operates. The extent of conclusions in other areas concerned with the quality of student learning opportunities are more or less detailed, with reports covering, variously, teaching quality and methodology, assessment, and learning resources, including IT and staffing.

2.96 Rigorous scrutiny of the outcomes and recommendations arising from Internal Review reports are not, generally, clearly documented. Final Review Panels incorporate externality and most include student membership. However, it is not always clear from the reports that Final Review Groups have met students to elicit their views on the programme, as required by the School's processes, though student evaluation through surveys is generally considered.

2.97 The review team **recommends** that the School review the scope, extent and consistency of reporting by final programme review groups to ensure that the rigorous scrutiny of outcomes of the internal review stage is clearly documented (by July 2015).

2.98 Internal Review reports and Final Review Group reports are considered by Management Board; the work of Implementation Committees is formally recorded; and Management Board receives review updates.

2.99 The review team concludes that Expectation B8 of the Quality Code is not met. The risk in this area is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.100 Assessment Policy Committee reviews and approves changes to the appeals and complaints procedures. The School's policies were redesigned during 2013-14 in response to feedback that they were lengthy and lacked clarity. The new appeals procedure outlines appropriate processes, timings, evidence requirements and definitions. Students have access to all the documentation used to make a decision and can be accompanied by a supporter if an Appeals Panel is held. The Academic and Ethics Students Representatives can also support students. Appeals are only permitted on grounds of extenuating circumstances or material error, not academic judgement. Taught students first submit an appeals form to the Deputy Dean (Programmes). The Quality Assurance Manager appoints an independent investigator, who can request evidence and interview the student and staff concerned. The investigator provides documentation to the Deputy Dean (Programmes) and Head of Quality Assurance who decide if there are grounds for an appeal. In complex cases, an Appeals Panel may consider the documentation instead. Following scrutiny, students can submit a further appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Research students may first appeal to the Programme Director, who escalates the appeal using the procedures above, if the matter cannot be resolved informally. If required, Academic Appeals Panels have terms of reference stipulating appropriate membership and decision-making processes.

2.101 Similarly, the Complaints Procedure details appropriate definitions, time limits, roles and responsibilities. Initially, the Programme Director will examine the complaint in an informal stage. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome or the case is deemed serious, issues are elevated to the Executive Director and Faculty Advisor. In very serious cases, the complaint will be escalated to a Student Complaints Committee, which has appropriate terms of reference and provision for students to be accompanied by someone of their choosing. Appropriate complaints and appeals procedures are in place to meet the Expectation.

2.102 The team explored staff, faculty and student awareness of complaints and appeals procedures and analysed supporting documentation alongside anonymised examples. A Student Guide to Academic Appeals helpfully summarises the processes and policies described above, and students are broadly aware of the options available to them. Doctoral-level academic regulations accurately outline the appeals policies above, as do master's-level programme handbooks. Students expressed concern about the length and complexity of appeals procedures, but the team is conscious that these comments may relate to the previous system. Procedures are regularly reviewed, the total number and subject breakdown of complaints are analysed, and the School maintains an appropriately detailed register of complaints. Exam Boards record when students were offered the opportunity to appeal decisions and log the outcomes of appeals. A Staff Guide to Procedures and Regulations succinctly summarises the appeals procedure and helps staff advise students accordingly. Faculty and staff follow complaints and appeals procedures effectively to resolve each in a timely and evidence-based manner. The operation and monitoring of clear, published complaints and appeals policies and procedures ensure that Expectation B9 of the Quality Code is met and the 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

2.103 The School's Collaborative Provision Policy was formulated and approved by Management Board in 2014 including minor amendments to the existing Policy, which originated in 2008 in response to the previous QAA review, and integration in the Policy itself of statements in relation to quality and standards previously set out in an appendix. The Policy echoes the School's Learning and Teaching Strategy and its 'global outlook' but that Strategy does not cite the Policy or reference particular collaborative provision. The Policy is concise and clear and overtly states that the School retains ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

2.104 The Policy sets out key principles for its collaborative provision: new programmes must be consistent with the School's strategic priorities, must support the School's mission for excellence in research-led teaching and should be comparable in student learning and support to School-based programmes; partnerships should only be agreed with organisations of a similar standing to the School whose standards and quality must be equivalent to the School's and who must be made aware of 'QAA and other benchmark information'.

2.105 The Policy is complemented by a detailed Collaborative Provision, Approval and Reapproval Process which sets out arrangements for programme/course and partner approval and which claims alignment with *Chapter B10* of the Quality Code, although that alignment has not been articulated by the School in an actual mapping.

2.106 The Process includes a clear and differentiated taxonomy of types of collaborative provision with School oversight at Management Board or Programme Office level according to those types. The School maintains a Register of Collaborative Provision, which articulates the type and volume of its collaborative provision arrangements and is clear on which collaborative activities were in scope or out of scope of the review. In scope were three EMBA programmes (one of two separate awards, one joint award and one delivered by flying faculty) and the import of courses undertaken on student exchange at collaborative partners. All partner approvals and re-approvals are signed off by Management Board. Out of scope were non-accredited commercial skills courses, the recognition of a School award by a Chinese University, the delivery of courses by the federal University of London and voluntary non-accredited internships complementing the School's taught programmes.

2.107 The Process sets out the due diligence arrangements, including the separation of the School's business and quality assurance decisions. The School confirms its entitlement to make joint awards under its Royal Charter. Echoing the Policy, the Process articulates provisions for the approval and reapproval of partners, subject to a set of key principles including strategic fit, research-led teaching, similar global ranking of the partner (all current partners are in fact prestigious foreign degree-awarding institutions) and comparability of learning opportunities with student support. Collaborative arrangements must be in disciplines within the School's expertise and, other than foreign language provision, delivery is in English as the global language of business and management. The School retains the right over serial arrangements which would be approved 'only in exceptional circumstances'.

There are none such currently. Overall, the School described its approach to the growth of collaborative provision as 'cautious'.

2.108 The School sustains its oversight of the quality assurance of collaborative programmes through the standard academic governance arrangement, supplemented in relation to the institutional approval process by the Associate Director, Global Partnership, working closely with the Head of Quality Assurance. Each collaborative provision arrangement is also underpinned at programme management level by a Programme Management Team reporting to a Programme Management Board, overseen by the Collaborative Programme Review Board, duly reporting into the School's Academic Governance structure, which works through subgroups on particular aspects of programme management: an Examinations Review Panel, an Admissions Committee, a Marketing Committee and a Student Issues Committee. Participation of the collaborative partner is ensured by a qualified quorum for Collaborative Programme Review Board which is also charged with ensuring sound communication between the partners.

2.109 The School sets out respective roles and responsibilities in formal contracts and the individual programme governance documents which cover the management or mitigation of potential risks, including termination and the protection of student interests.

2.110 The School reports that it will be updating its Academic Regulations to confirm the statement in the Policy and the Process in relation to its retention of ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. This includes the import of credit from courses during student exchange at approved collaborative partner institutions. Such student exchange arrangements are approved at programme level and are secured by a formal written agreement. Information in relation to proposed courses is provided by the collaborative partner for School approval of its academic content, level, standard and assessment arrangements. Credit gained is on a pass or fail basis with no mark transition scheme or impact on overall award calculation. The School also operates a Global Partnerships Assessment Panel which oversees marks and grades received from collaborative partner institutions for approved external courses contributing towards School awards. The Panel includes senior School staff and a minimum of one external examiner in its membership and makes recommendations on the marks and grades received to the relevant School Examination Board.

2.111 The individual programme governance documents set out detailed arrangements and responsibilities in relation to admissions, registration, programme governance and structure and assessment requirements including the monitoring of assessment, assessment criteria and grading. For the benefit of the student, who must sign an individual copy, they also set out the broad range of terms and conditions, to cite indicatively: from fees to academic good conduct, from academic appeals to complaints and from facilities to data protection. Again, the general approach adopted is that where specific programme management and assessment regulations and arrangements are not stated, there is an overt default to the School's general regulations and arrangements.

2.112 Student and marketing information is approved and monitored at programme level in accordance with specific arrangements set out in the formal contract and the individual programme governance documents.

2.113 The School duly records the awarding bodies on joint degree certificates and records delivery by collaborative partners on degree transcripts.

2.114 As well as the partner approval, contract and individual programme governance documents already cited and seen by the review team, the team can confirm that the School did, as stated, sustain its oversight of the quality adherence of collaborative programmes through its standard academic governance arrangements, including external examiner

reports and Faculty Advisor reports. In addition to the coverage of all provision delivered by its own staff through the School's own external examiners' reports, the collaborative partners on the three EMBA programmes also appoint external examiners for any provision which they deliver and which contributes to a School award. All reports are considered by the Collaborative Programme Review Board and then by the School's Management Board. The School has not approved a new programme since 2008 but, as proxy evidence, the School provided the team with documentation relating to an initiative, not within the scope of the current review, with the University of Fudan, China, to illustrate how a new collaborative programme and partner might be approved. The team also saw documentation articulating the approval of the two EMBA Global which confirmed that approval was not open-ended, expiring in 2017.

2.115 The team also looked at the Collaborative Programme Review Board's annual report to Management Board in 2014 which highlighted topics for consideration and appended both annual programme review and Collaborative Programme Review Board's minutes as discharge of its remit to oversee delivery of the School's collaborative programmes. Accordingly, the team considered Collaborative Programme Review Board minutes and the appropriate referral of matters relating to the review of the core curriculum to School Faculty Advisors and the School's Management Board.

2.116 The School cites complimentary comment by AMBA on its management of external accreditation and arrangements for students on collaborative programmes and by the QAA Review of Transnational Education in the UAE on its programme planning for the EMBA Dubai.

2.117 The team met faculty and staff with responsibility for and engagement in the School's collaborative provision who emphasised the high level of formal and informal interactions between all partners which allow the School to confirm the equivalence of academic standards and of teaching and learning resources at its partners. Faculty stressed the key role of the Deputy Dean (Programmes) and other senior faculty, via Collaborative Programme Review Board formal meetings and monthly operational meetings, in ensuring that all provision was aligned with UK academic standards.

2.118 The team confirmed in discussion with School faculty and staff that the quality assurance mechanisms described by the School are in operation. In addition, the team held a teleconference with the senior academic at Hong Kong University with responsibility for strategic oversight of the EMBA Global Asia and was similarly able to confirm that Collaborative Programme Review Board and its subsidiary supporting bodies are operating as designed by the School and its partners.

2.119 Overall, the team concludes that the design and operation of the School's processes for managing higher education provision with others meet Expectation B10 of the Quality Code and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.120 The School's MPhil/PhD Regulations have been effective since October 2010 and set out how the School manages its research programmes in relation to admission, supervision, student progress, duration, thesis submission, examiners and examination and academic appeals. Unlike the Academic Regulations, the PhD/MPhil Regulations do not overtly reference alignment with the FHEQ. The School states its confidence that its MPhil/PhD programme and its assessment align with Level 8 of the FHEQ, but the confirmatory mechanisms it cites to evidence this relate only to taught programmes. Changes to the MPhil/PhD Regulations would be reviewed by PhD Committee and approved by Assessment Policy Committee.

2.121 The School's research portfolio comprises the MPhil/PhD Programme, consisting of a two-year taught MRes, a period of research at MPhil level of nine months prior to transfer for two years' PhD study. There are 80 students currently registered across the five years of the programme. All are full-time and are fully funded via a fee waiver and a four-year stipend, which the School is considering extending to five years, so that students are not distracted by income-generation activities in their final year.

2.122 The Regulations are complemented by a PhD Student Code of Practice, which was revised for the academic year 2014-15 and by a PhD Student Guide to London Business School. These offer a comprehensive account of the student journey. The Code of Practice cross-refers to other bodies and procedures relevant to the research student, for example to the Ethics Policy and Research Ethics Committee.

2.123 The MPhil/PhD Programme is managed by a Programme Chair, administered by the Programme Office and overseen by the PhD Committee which monitors trends and evaluates performance indicators in a report to the School's Executive Committee. The School benchmarks against international competitor schools in relation to indicators such as progression, withdrawal, completion, placements and employment destinations. The Programme is also subject to the School's periodic review arrangements and, having last been reviewed in 2009, arrangements are in place for a programme review, including two external reviewers, in the academic year 2014-15.

2.124 The School provides Research Students with an electronic PhD Portal which explains its research environment in the context of its seven 'research concentrations', which provide the framework within which its students may participate in the School's innovative, collaborative and multidisciplinary research with a highly experienced and research-active academic staff. The PhD Portal also signposts support documentation, such as the PhD Student Code of Practice and PhD Student's Guide to London Business School, and identifies facilities and accommodation which include dedicated study/office space and communal areas. The School cites complimentary comment on its research environment by AMBA and EQUIS.

2.125 The School's arrangements for admission are set out in the MPhil/PhD Regulations and PhD Student Code of Practice. The PhD Portal offers clear information for prospective

students in its Help Me Choose section. Advanced standing on the MPhil to a maximum of three courses on the basis of accreditation of prior learning is permitted and admission to the MPhil may take account of accreditation of experiential prior learning. Admission to the PhD is subject to the completion of the MRes and successful transfer from the MPhil.

The School's general admission requirements on such matters of English language competence also apply and the PhD Student Code of Practice advises that admission is based on requirements including academic qualifications, professional experience, potential and suitability for doctoral research and evidence of proficiency in the English language. All admissions are subject to interview and all are centrally administered and approved by the PhD Committee although that responsibility is not explicitly included in its terms of reference. The School does not separately monitor that its admission arrangements for research students demonstrate equality of opportunity.

2.126 Students offered admission receive a bespoke letter setting out or signposting key practical information and also detailed discipline area guidance which identifies respective responsibilities and student entitlement. In addition to the PhD Portal, comprehensive hard copy information and guidance is provided for all students. Students undertake a three-day orientation programme at induction and, as reported by the Student Association annual survey, the School provides briefings at the start of each programme 'regarding LBS and expectations on plagiarism and student collaboration'. The general student information takes full account of its diverse international clientele. For example, the orientation programme includes a session called Developing International Communication Skills.

2.127 The School provides a Supervisors' Workshop that supervisors are required to attend annually or every three years if 'experienced', as cited in the PhD Student Code of Practice, or every five years according to the self-evaluation document, which also advises that staff from the Research and Faculty Office meet all new supervisors individually to deliver the PhD Student Code of Practice and answer any questions. Normally only tenured staff supervise, with a PhD coordinator available in the first year and then a main supervisor allocated according to the research topic. Upon commencement of PhD study, a Dissertation Committee is established with the main supervisor as chair, supported by two other staff, one of whom is the person from outside the discipline area who chaired the transfer process from MPhil.

2.128 The detailed responsibilities of the supervisor and student are set out in the PhD Student Code of Practice. Pastoral support is provided through professional services staff, including a Student Counsellor, Personal Skills Advisor, Disability Advisor and PhD Programme Office staff. Supervisors are aware of where to signpost students appropriately. The frequency of meetings between supervisor and student is discussed between the two parties but the School applies an effective minimum frequency of once a month, although the self-evaluation document suggests once a week is more usual and this was confirmed by faculty and research students. The student must keep a monthly record of such meetings from the second year onwards and forward it to the supervisor for sign-off and lodging with the Programme Office.

2.129 The PhD Programme's mission which the School depicts as quality over quantity is 'to educate excellent scholars who will be sought after as faculty in the world's leading business schools, universities and research institutions'. The School invests heavily in supporting its research studentships not only through the fee waiver and stipend but also by ensuring the availability of research-active faculty for supervision.

2.130 The MPhil/PhD Regulations clearly set out matters such as programme duration, progression points and assessment arrangements. In addition to the monthly supervision meeting reports, an annual progress report is completed by the student and discussed and approved by the supervisor before being lodged with the Programme Office.

Progression from MPhil to PhD is subject to a transfer assessment of a thesis proposal assessed by a Transfer Committee against criteria set out in the MPhil/PhD Regulations.

2.131 The School is an ESRC-accredited Doctoral Training Centre. The initial MRes in itself could be seen as equivalent to two years of development of research skills and training. The School also describes a range of other research skills and training activities and developmental opportunities, including seminars, workshops and discussions.

2.132 The School captures individual student feedback via monthly and annual reports. The School advises that there is also student representation on the PhD Committee, although this is not clear in its membership. However, the School does not operate a systematic means of capturing and addressing generic issues arising from that feedback or from supervisors' reports, nor does the School participate in the national PRES on research students' learning and supervision experience so as to benchmark its provision against the UK sector.

2.133 The School's detailed arrangements for final assessment are clearly set out in the MPhil/PhD Regulations and PhD Student Code of Practice, including the criteria for assessing the qualification of MPhil and PhD, thesis submission requirements and arrangements for the appointment of examiners and assessment procedures.

2.134 Normally, two examiners are appointed by PhD Committee for a final assessment: one 'internal' from the University of London, who must not have had prior involvement in the research candidature, say as a supervisor or member of the student's Transfer/Dissertation Committee, and an external. The PhD Committee annually reviews the pattern of examiners appointed in each subject area over the previous three years. The School does not appoint an independent chair and does not advise otherwise how the School would ensure consistency of the final assessment process or an additional viewpoint in the event of an academic appeal. Faculty advised that the matter had never been considered at PhD Committee.

2.135 The MPhil/PhD Regulations set out what preparatory steps the examiners are required to take, including production by each one of a preliminary report, and the range of options available to the examiners following the final assessment. The examiners complete a joint final report identifying the option determined. All three reports are submitted for actioning to the PhD Programme Office. If the examiners determine that the degree should be awarded, the candidate is included on a pass list. The pass list and outcome letter to the candidate are then subject to final sign-off by an independent senior academic who checks the submitted reports, all of which are available to the student in the event of academic appeal. The team viewed sample examiners' reports, both the detailed reports prepared by each examiner and the joint report completed after final assessment.

2.136 The School does not operate a systematic means of capturing and addressing generic issues arising from individual joint examiners' reports because of the size of the institution and the small number of candidates.

2.137 The MPhil/PhD Regulations set out detailed arrangements for academic appeal, including reference to possible recourse to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Research student complaints are not differentiated and are subject to the School's Student Complaint Procedure.

2.138 The review team saw the range of cited policies, procedures, document templates and guidance and sampled use of those templates in relation to individual candidates. The team met faculty, staff and research students and can confirm that the range of quality assurance mechanisms described by the School are in operation. The research students whom the team met confirmed the existence of student representation arrangements,

including at PhD Committee; of sound supervisory and research and other training arrangements, including where research students are required to teach; of the accessible availability of information from induction to clear assessment criteria and processes; and of a generally supportive and well-resourced environment for their studies.

2.139 The School advised the team that its MPhil/PhD Regulations had been 'inherited' from the University of London in 2010 (and they are indeed marked 'effective from 1 October 2010') and that they had never been benchmarked by the School's deliberative committees against the doctoral (Level 8) qualification description of the FHEQ. The School advises that such benchmarking is included in the programme review currently in progress. This omission is further described in section A3.1 of this report. Similarly, the School advised the team that it had never benchmarked its alignment with *Chapter B11* of the Quality Code through its deliberative committees against its own arrangements for the quality assurance of research degrees.

2.140 The School was unable to supply the team with evidence of the collection and analysis of generic research student feedback or its consideration by the PhD Committee and confirmed that it did not supplement in generic form its collection and analysis of individual student feedback. While recognising the relatively small size of the School and of the research student body overall, the team **recommends** that the School put in place a mechanism to collect, review and respond to generic feedback from its research students (by July 2015).

2.141 Overall, the team concludes that the School's arrangements for research degrees meet Expectation B11 of the Quality Code and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.142 In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. Ten of the Expectations for this judgement area are met with low risk; one is unmet and at a moderate level of risk.

2.143 The review team identified four features of good practice. One in B2 concerns information, advice and guidance to enable applicants to make an informed choice of programme; another in B3 concerns the individualised support offered by the School to learners. Within the same Expectation another commented on the integrated planning process that enables the provision of high-quality resourcing. Within B4 the team also identified the extensive support for students to develop their career opportunities as good practice.

2.144 There are four recommendations. Two are within Expectation B6. One refers to the need to design and implement a process of assessment that addresses the potential inequity of applying the grading curve to streams rather than cohorts. The second refers to the need to ensure that class contribution assessment criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and formally communicated to students. A further recommendation is in the unmet Expectation, B8. This requires the School to review the scope, extent and consistency of reporting by final programme review groups to ensure that the rigorous scrutiny of outcomes of the internal review stage is clearly documented. This reflects the team's view that the School's programme review processes are insufficiently robust to enable B8 to be met. The last recommendation attaches to B11. This refers to the need for a mechanism to collect, review and respond to generic feedback from the School's research students.

2.145 There were no affirmations in this area.

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

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

- 3.1 The School publishes information about itself through electronic and paper-based media: primarily its website, social media and brochures. The hardcopy material largely replicates online information. The website is directed at a range of audiences, including international business, the general public, prospective students and current staff, faculty and students.
- 3.2 Current students use an electronic Portal to access information about their programmes and courses and all aspects of the School's academic and corporate life. Information and guidance on the Portal includes all policies and procedures, a discussion network and the student code of conduct. Students also receive comprehensive programme handbooks in hardcopy.
- 3.3 The School's Marketing and Communication Department is responsible for the website and provides detailed guidance for staff on the presentation of the School on web pages and in social media. The guidance focuses particularly on the character and coherence of the School's brand.
- 3.4 The management and resourcing of information at the School allow it to address its audiences in ways that are consistent with the Quality Code, particularly Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision.
- 3.5 The review team had access to the website and the Portal that allowed it to sample the information available to the public and members of the School. The full range of the hardcopy documents published by the School were also made available. In meetings, students, faculty and staff were asked about their use of the Portal and other information sources.
- 3.6 At the time of the review, the Marketing and Communications department was leading the commissioning and development of a new website including an upgrading of the Portal that would allow it to provide a much greater range of facilities, particularly more interactive learning and teaching support.
- 3.7 The School recognised that responsibility for the provision of information on the website and in hardcopy documents is dispersed among different groups and that, other than in the case of marketing information, a variety of individuals have authority to sign off what is published. This has not led to any difficulties because in a small institution there is sufficient shared understanding of policies and the overall mission. However, the Marketing and Communications Department is developing protocols to secure greater control and centralisation. The School has developed social media and internal emailing guidelines for staff.
- 3.8 The current website is of high quality and contains a comprehensive range of documentation, such as admissions policies, financial and governance statements, diversity reports, and sustainability policies. Substantial information about programme structure,

funding, visas and admissions is available online. The EMBA Global Americas and EMA Global Asia programmes have a separate website.

3.9 The Marketing and Communications department is primarily responsible for the accuracy and quality of published information. Effectiveness from a marketing perspective is monitored monthly and also sent to the Senior Management Team as an annual report and balance scorecard. Information about the School's programmes published by collaborative partners requires approval from the marketing team and programme directors. The School operates a range of brand guidelines, templates and briefs to ensure information is consistent. There are templates (with guidance) for both programme specifications and course outlines.

3.10 The student submission and students met by the team indicate that information on the Portal is not transparently organised and therefore sometimes difficult to locate. The view of the School is that these difficulties will be addressed by the development of the new website and upgraded Portal.

3.11 Information and guidance for prospective students is detailed and comprehensive and offers clear routes to further information and the applications and admissions processes. There is full information on available programmes of study and their suitability for different student requirements, including entry requirements, fees and the costs of study. The School has published external examiners' reports on the Portal since 2014. A comprehensive and regularly updated register of partners involved in the collaborative provision of teaching and assessment leading to the School's awards is available on the website. Degree certificates and transcripts provide comprehensive detail on the award and its components. Award transcripts appropriately highlight the programmes taught in collaboration with others.

3.12 The review team concludes that information provided by the School to the public, prospective students, current students and those responsible for standards and quality is fit for purpose, accurate and trustworthy, and the Expectation is met with a low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.13 In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this area.

3.14 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities **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 vision of the School is to have a profound impact on the way the world does business. It aims to realise this vision through, among other means, the influence and achievements of its graduates and the continuing enhancement of the quality of its research, programmes and the student experience.

4.2 Enhancement is driven at School level by the institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy 2014 and the School Plan. The Quality Assurance Strategy 2009 is currently under review, for Management Board approval in November 2014.

4.3 The ongoing development of learning and teaching is underpinned by three core principles set out in the Learning and Teaching Strategy: the fundamental link between the School's teaching and research activities; the need to ensure academic quality and rigour; and the importance of maintaining the programmes' relevance to the business world.

4.4 The School's five-year plan and budget process is a key vehicle for enhancement and, more specifically, for the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The plan incorporates annual departmental plans, including plans for the degree and PhD programmes, which set out objectives and key performance indicators aligned with corporate objectives.

4.5 Draft annual departmental plans are developed locally and then discussed at School level, to ensure articulation with corporate objectives before being finalised. Interim Reports, followed by Final Reports, on progress and on the achievement of corporate and departmental objectives are presented annually to Management Committee, Executive Committee, Management Board and the Board of Governors.

4.6 The School's processes allow the Expectation relating to the enhancement of student learning opportunities to be met.

4.7 The review team scrutinised the School's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented procedures, formal reporting, information provided to students and meetings with staff.

4.8 School plans set out corporate and departmental objectives and key performance indicators concerned with the improvement of students' learning opportunities. Corporate objectives include portfolio development to deliver programmes combining theory and practice; deepening links with business; maximising students' employment opportunities; support for students moving into roles worldwide; enhancement of learning technologies and virtual learning spaces; and development of the estate. Articulating departmental objectives typically focus on curricular excellence; assessment strategy; the wider student experience, including the London and international business experience; technology for learning; skills provision; and employability and careers provision.

4.9 Notable significant enhancement initiatives include the MBA London Business Experience and the MiF London Finance Experience, which provide students with the opportunity to learn how the theories, models and insights gained in the classroom can be

applied in practice; and the Asia Career Fairs organised and hosted by the School's Careers Service.

4.10 Annual reporting via the Management Board to the Board of Governors provides appropriate School oversight of enhancement activity, with a clear, systematic record of progress and achievement at both School and departmental levels.

4.11 Overall, the review team concludes that the Enhancement Expectation is met with a low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.12 In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no features of good practice, recommendations and affirmations.

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

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The School places great emphasis on careers support for students and the School Plan includes clear expectations with very high employability targets for all programmes. The curricula are designed to integrate skills for employability and considerable additional support is available on all programmes with the aim of improving students' employability by helping them to manage and own their individual career search and journey from joining the School through to post-graduation and beyond.

5.2 The careers service is extremely well resourced. Students have the opportunity for one-to-one career coaching. The impact of the Career Services department on the employability of the students it supports is demonstrated by the School's position in business school rankings exercises.

5.3 Innovations in promoting the employability of students include an extensive programme of additional activities, including the London Finance Experience on the Masters of Finance programme in which students have the opportunity to engage with a number of major financial employers. The MBA integrates the Leadership Launch programme as a thin course running throughout the programme to develop student 'soft skills'. Another innovation is in holding a careers fair overseas jointly with other peer institutions.

5.4 Employers are involved in the delivery and development of the curriculum through engagement with alumni, including involvement of some in the interview process for applicants to the School. There is an extensive guest lecturer programme which includes high-profile speakers from industry. Students are offered the opportunity to undertake an extensive range of internships. Employers are also involved in some of the societies.

5.5 Employers are extensively involved in programme reviews and also in sponsorship of the School.

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 27 to 29 of the [Higher Education Review handbook](#).

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

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

Academic standards

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

Award

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

Blended learning

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

Credit(s)

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

Degree-awarding body

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

Distance learning

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

Dual award or double award

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

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

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

Expectations

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

Flexible and distributed learning

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

See also **distance learning**.

Framework

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

Framework for higher education qualifications

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

Good practice

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

Learning opportunities

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

Learning outcomes

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

Multiple awards

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

Operational definition

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

Programme (of study)

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

Programme specifications

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

Public information

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

Quality Code

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

Reference points

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

Subject Benchmark Statement

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

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

Threshold academic standard

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

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

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

Widening participation

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

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