



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of London Churchill College Ltd

May 2016

Contents

About this review	1
Key findings.....	2
QAA's judgements about London Churchill College Ltd	2
Good practice	2
Recommendations	2
Financial sustainability, management and governance	2
Theme: Student Employability.....	3
About London Churchill College Ltd.....	3
Explanation of the findings about London Churchill College Ltd.....	5
1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations	6
2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities.....	17
3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities	38
4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities	41
5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability.....	44
Glossary.....	45

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at London Churchill College Ltd. The review took place from 17 to 19 May 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Mark Foster
- Dr Carol Vielba
- Mr Ken Harris (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review, the QAA review team:

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

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

In reviewing London Churchill College Ltd the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The [themes](#) for the academic year 2015-16 are Student Employability, and Digital Literacy,² and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

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.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.³ A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).⁴ 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/quality-code.

² Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859

³ QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

⁴ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about London Churchill College Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at London Churchill College Ltd.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body and other awarding organisation **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **requires improvement** to meet 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 Churchill College Ltd.

- The Expected Answer Guidelines (EAGs), which support students in understanding what should be demonstrated for the achievement of learning outcomes (Expectation B6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to London Churchill College Ltd.

By September 2016:

- develop and implement a process for the formal amendment of College provision, with specific attention to Pearson programmes (Expectation B1)
- introduce a systematic means of evaluating student application, enrolment and induction procedures (Expectation B2)
- strengthen and publish the policies and procedures for the effective and equitable identification and support of students with additional needs (Expectations B4 and B6)
- publish assessment policies and procedures which are clear, comprehensive, consistent and appropriately targeted towards defined student groups (Expectation B6)
- develop and implement a procedure for periodic review of all College provision (Expectation B8)
- strengthen oversight and operational management of students' mandatory work placements (Expectation B10)
- embed and monitor the College strategy for enhancement to ensure that it is systematic, planned and coordinated (Enhancement).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

London Churchill College Ltd satisfactorily completed the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

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

Theme: Student Employability

London Churchill College Ltd (the College, LCC) recognises the role of employers in enhancing student employability and the quality of learning opportunities. The Employability Strategy sets out ways that employers can engage with the College, and these articulate directly with Strategic Plan objectives. The College has recently appointed a Head of Employability to oversee the Employability Strategy and its implementation.

The College is committed to embedding employability across the curriculum and supporting students in obtaining employment. It is taking initial steps to improve the support for students in identifying and undertaking placements. There is a new Employer Forum which aims to bring together local employers and students with a view to raising awareness of employers' expectations regarding necessary skills for employment.

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

About London Churchill College Ltd

London Churchill College Ltd is an alternative for-profit provider established in 2006. It is based in East London and has three sites: an existing location in Whitechapel, and two new buildings in Forest Gate and Barking. At the time of the visit, work was underway to develop the new sites, including in preparation for delivery of University of Bedfordshire awards, and expand the existing location.

The College mission is to 'provide the highest quality learning opportunities that meet the specific needs of our students and which promote and enhance self-confidence, develop personal achievement and an enterprising outlook to maximise employability.' A new Strategic Plan was revised by the Senior Management Team (SMT) in December 2015 and approved by Academic Board and the College Oversight Board in the spring of 2016. Its aims are to:

- encourage the widest possible participation of students both formally and informally, in education, leading to progression into employment or higher education, through fostering a culture of student employability, and continually seeking to expand our student numbers and our offering
- develop a sustainable University partnership leading to the acquisition of Taught Degree Awarding Powers
- create teaching resources that achieve effective and efficient learning, including investing in staff and facilities to deliver the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) at a high standard and engage fully with students by ensuring full attention is given to the student voice
- enhance the management of resources efficiently and effectively and develop internal quality measures which mirror national metrics and provide the information needed for academic and administrative staff to measure performance
- achieve annual operating surpluses year on year.

Since 2012, the College has offered Pearson Education Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) in Business, Health and Social Care, and Hospitality Management to UK and EU students. Across three intakes annually, 483 students were recruited to these programmes in 2014-15. This gave a total of 746 students enrolled. A significant proportion of students recruited are 'newly settled British citizens of diverse backgrounds.'

Following the appointment of a new Principal in June 2014, the College restructured and made a number of new senior appointments. It also reviewed its strategic and operational approach, and reappraised its approach to quality assurance and enhancement with a view to delivery of degree-level qualifications.

These developments led to the College reaching an agreement with the University of Bedfordshire (the University) in June 2014 to pursue a collaborative partnership for delivery of degree-level provision. The College was approved as an academic partner of the University in May 2015 and then approved to deliver franchised foundation degrees in Business Management and in Events and Hospitality Management, commencing in September 2016.

The University has also approved the College as a study centre whereby, from September 2015, the College's sites have been used to deliver a University level 6 Business Management programme. Academic staff delivering the programme are either University staff or College staff employed by the University for that work. The intention is that this will build the College's capacity in readiness for it to offer level 6 provision from September 2016. Under the study centre arrangement, College professional staff support a number of functions including marketing, admissions, student support and complaints.

The College's Board of Directors has oversight of the business, including the relationship with shareholders, accounting and finance, risk management, human resource management and the College's infrastructure and facilities. The College Oversight Board, which has external membership, 'provides appropriate support and challenge to the College's Board of Directors' and has 'working relationships with the college's senior management.' It has oversight of the relationships with QAA, awarding partners and external examiners, and quality, standards and student engagement. The Academic Board, the minutes of which go to the Oversight Board, has delegated oversight of academic matters. A Learning, Teaching, Quality Committee (LTQC), reporting to Academic Board, had been newly constituted in March 2016. There is also a Senior Management Team (SMT) responsible for day-to-day operations management and a Senior Academic Management Team (SAMT) responsible for day-to-day academic operations management.

Students at the College provided a student submission to this review, based on a Student Experience Questionnaire produced with the support of the College administration. Two students were elected as Lead Student Representatives for the review.

The College lists a number of challenges which include maintaining progress on meeting University key performance indicators, continuing with academic site developments, dealing with management information and reporting requirements, establishing and expanding approaches to work-related learning on new programmes, and ensuring effective student transition from Higher National programmes to level 6 study. It also notes the challenge of engaging with the changing higher education landscape with respect to quality assurance and the introduction of the TEF.

QAA carried out a Review for Educational Oversight (REO) in May 2012. This report recorded three advisable recommendations, three desirable recommendations, and four examples of good practice. The College produced an action plan and progress has been monitored annually by QAA. In each case, the reports have noted that the College is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision.

Explanation of the findings about London Churchill College Ltd

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 maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations

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

a) ensure that the requirements of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 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 Academic standards are set by the College's awarding partners: Pearson in the case of HND provision; the University of Bedfordshire (the University) in the case of foundation degrees and top-up programmes. The College's Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) has been revised to reflect University terminology. It requires that programmes and their titles should be mapped against *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and that this will be considered within the validation process. It also specifies that Subject Benchmark Statements should be a reference point for programme design and approval.

1.2 The HNDs offered at Levels 4 and 5 are directly overseen, as the College does not currently offer Pearson 'user-defined' modules. Pearson, as the awarding organisation, is ultimately responsible for designing and approving the overall programme and individual units, including with respect to the level of the qualifications, the learning outcomes, assessment criteria, the overarching grading criteria and the permitted combinations of units.

1.3 The College has also been approved to offer University foundation degrees from September 2016. The approval has been under the auspices of the University's approval process, which confirms the level of programme proposals and their alignment between learning outcomes and level descriptors. The College's Academic Board has institutional responsibility for maintaining academic standards and managing learning opportunities.

1.4 The policies and processes in place at the College appear to facilitate the meeting of the Expectation. To test this, the review team examined a range of evidence, including the Pearson Checklist of Responsibilities, Academic Board terms of reference, the QAH, and University approval documentation, and explored its application in meetings with College staff.

1.5 Minutes of Academic Board confirm that maintenance of academic standards is an agenda item at each meeting and that a range of related issues are discussed, including Pearson Annual Management Review and QAA annual monitoring reports.

1.6 The Pearson Academic Management Review for 2015-16 confirmed that the College exercises its responsibilities for the maintenance of the academic standards of HND awards. In meetings with staff, the team was able to confirm that the College offers currently delivered programmes in accordance with Pearson guidelines and uses its internal processes to assure itself that the academic standards align with external expectations.

1.7 Scrutiny of the approval documentation for the University programmes revealed that course proposals were developed and approved in line with University expectations for the standards of awards. Templates incorporate mapping to external benchmarks, including the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, while course and unit specifications state levels and credit values. Staff showed an awareness of University requirements.

1.8 The review team found that the College is aligned with both Pearson and University practices and requirements in maintaining academic standards in line with external reference points. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.9 Responsibility for academic frameworks and regulations is held by Pearson or the University, depending on the specific award. Responsibilities Checklists for both Pearson and the University set out the specific responsibilities of the College. The College is required to develop internal processes and procedures for the maintenance of academic standards, liaising with the awarding body and organisation as necessary. These are set out in the QAH. Academic Board terms of reference state the College's responsibilities for the academic frameworks and regulations that maintain standards. The College's approach is, increasingly, to follow the University's frameworks for credit and qualifications in developing its own framework.

1.10 The policies and processes in place at the College would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met. To confirm this, the review team considered documents including the QAH, committee terms of reference and minutes, and the Pearson Checklist of Responsibilities, and met College managers and academic staff.

1.11 The QAH includes details of the College's organisational structure and sets out policies and procedures enabling it to comply with the academic framework and regulations required by Pearson and the University. Heads of department are responsible for ensuring that provision within their area complies with the College's quality framework. The 2015-16 Academic Management Review confirmed the College's adherence to the Pearson framework and its academic regulations. In 2015, the University approved the College as having an appropriate framework and regulations for the maintenance of academic standards.

1.12 The review team established that the College has a framework and regulations in place that support the maintenance of academic standards as specified by both Pearson and the University. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.13 The Quality Handbook sets out each awarding organisation's requirements for programme specifications, including for content and layout. These are reiterated in the Responsibilities Checklists. For both Pearson and University provision, programme specifications are confirmed at validation and then should be published within Programme Handbooks, and on the virtual learning environment (VLE).

1.14 The policies and processes in place have the capacity to allow the Expectation to be met. To test this, the review team scrutinised programme development and approval documentation; records of programme approval meetings; Programme Handbooks; the QAH; Academic Board minutes; Internal Verification Board minutes; and the Responsibilities Checklists. The team also talked to a selection of staff and students.

1.15 The Responsibilities Checklists clearly set out the requirements for the College in maintaining definitive programme records. For its Pearson provision, the College's internal verification process is used to monitor the currency of definitive records. Only one change has been made thus far but staff noted that further changes were envisaged with the issue of new Pearson specifications. The College's attention to the University's requirements for definitive programme records had been demonstrated in the recent development and approval of the FDA Events and Hospitality Management programme.

1.16 All Programme Handbooks include the programme specification. Students met by the review team confirmed that they are aware of, and satisfied with, the content and accessibility of the Programme Handbooks.

1.17 The review team established that the College has in place effective arrangements for maintaining and amending definitive programme records. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in accordance with the requirements of the awarding partners. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.18 The College has policies and procedures for the approval of its provision which are intended to operate in conjunction with the two awarding partners. The College's approach to programme approval is discussed in detail in Section B1.

1.19 The review team found that the College has policies and processes in place for programme approval which are designed to ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets UK threshold standards and are in accordance with the academic frameworks and regulations of its awarding partners.

1.20 In order to assess the effectiveness of the College's procedures for programme approval the review team examined policy documents, templates and handbooks; and documents created during programme approval.

1.21 The College does not offer any locally devised units on its HND provision. The programme and module specifications used on the HND programmes are provided by Pearson, whose aims and learning outcomes have been designed to ensure that UK threshold standards are met. The College has discretion over the mix of units offered. Approval of changes involved in implementing new programme specifications provided by Pearson would involve the use of the College's development and approval procedures to amend College provision. The review team formed the view that the College should ensure that these processes are designed to articulate clearly with Pearson policies and procedures regarding programme and unit amendment, as well as with the University's processes. In turn, this supports the recommendation in section B1.

1.22 The foundation degrees and top-up programme offered in conjunction with the University are franchised. The review team found that the policies and procedures for programme approval set out in the QAH are implemented effectively and demonstrate the incorporation of UK threshold standards and University academic regulations. Approval follows University processes. A joint College and University programme development team completes templates that include mapping to external benchmarks such as the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements. Levels and credit values are stated on course and unit specifications, which also detail learning outcomes. An approval panel, which includes external members, is required to confirm that the University's requirements for standards and alignment with its frameworks and regulations have been met. As yet, the University's policies and processes for programme amendment have not been implemented as the franchised programmes are not yet running.

1.23 The College has recently reviewed its practices against Expectation A3.1 of the Quality Code. The College concluded that it has appropriate processes in place but that their implementation should be reviewed to ensure effectiveness.

1.24 The review team concludes that the College, with the support of its awarding partners, operates programme approval procedures that ensure that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold standards and are in accordance with relevant

academic frameworks and regulations. Expectation A3.1 is met and the associated 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

1.25 The College is not currently involved in the assessment of students for the award of credit or qualifications by the University. For its HND students the College operates assessment processes which follow the regulations and guidance provided by its awarding body, Pearson. These processes include the setting, marking and internal verification of assessments that test the achievement of learning outcomes. The learning outcomes, which are supplied by Pearson, are aligned with UK threshold standards. Assessment and progress boards are held following Pearson guidance. Assessment processes for the HND programmes are externally moderated and assured by a Standards Verifier on behalf of Pearson. The College's approach to assessment is discussed in more detail in Section B6.

1.26 The review team found that the College has policies and processes in place to ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where learning outcomes and the academic standards of its awarding partners have been met.

1.27 In order to assess the effectiveness of the College's procedures for assessment of learning outcomes, the review team read College documents; reports by the awarding body, Pearson, on the practice of assessment at the College; and the terms of reference and minutes of internal assessment boards. The review team met staff responsible for the practice and oversight of assessment.

1.28 The review team found that the College's processes and procedures for assessment on its HND programmes are effective. Although the review team found that the College's assessment policies more generally require attention in order to be clear, comprehensive and consistent (see Section B6), the review team concludes that, in practice, the robust policies and processes of Pearson ensure that standards are assured across the HND programmes.

1.29 The most recent Standards Verifier reports for the HND programmes and the latest academic management review for the College confirm that the College's assessment processes align with those expected by Pearson. Assessment design is seen to be appropriate for testing learning outcomes, varied and related to business and professional practice. The reports confirm that marking and internal verification is effective and the recording of marks is secure. Assessment and Internal Verification Boards and Assessment and Progress Boards are seen to operate formally and effectively.

1.30 The College has an informal system in place for the identification of additional needs and the provision of reasonable adjustments for students, an issue previously raised in Pearson reports and considered by the College. The review team concludes that the current ad hoc approach may not have resulted in individual students being disadvantaged in achieving learning outcomes, but has advised elsewhere in the report (see Sections B4 and B6) that the College should develop a systematic approach to reasonable adjustments.

1.31 The College has mapped its practice against section A3.2 of the Quality Code. The exercise identified a number of areas for review and enhancement.

1.32 The review team concludes that the College, in partnership with its awarding body and organisation, operates processes for the assessment of learning outcomes which ensure that credit and qualifications are only awarded where UK and awarding body standards have been met. The Expectation in Chapter A3.2 is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.33 Responsibility for the academic standards of programmes offered by the College on behalf of its awarding partners is vested in the Academic Board. This responsibility includes approving and reviewing effective procedures for routine monitoring and review of programmes. The College's systems, processes and procedures for monitoring and review are described in greater detail in Section B8 of this report. In addition to producing College reviews at unit, programme and institutional level, the College also receives annual reports on its performance from Pearson. Monitoring and review of University provision has not yet commenced. The College does not as yet have a process for periodic review.

1.34 The review team found that the policies and processes in place for programme monitoring and review are designed to check whether UK threshold standards are achieved and the academic standards of the awarding body are being maintained.

1.35 In order to assess the effectiveness of the College's procedures for programme monitoring and review the review team examined the College's mapping of its practice; the College's quality manual; committee terms of reference and minutes; external reports; and the College's annual monitoring reports and action plans.

1.36 Unit leaders are asked to evaluate the appropriateness, currency and relevance of the content and scheme of work for their unit at the end of each presentation. They are also asked to compare student performance with that of previous presentations. Overall student performance is examined in greater detail in the termly review enhancement process reports (REP) covering all HND provision. Further comparison and comment on statistics relating to student performance is contained in the College's annual monitoring review (CAMR).

1.37 Pearson-appointed Standards Verifiers provide commentary on the quality and standards of the College's provision in annual reports. Issues identified in these reports feed into the CAMR and its action plan. Both the REP and the CAMR are discussed and approved by Academic Board. Issues emanating from both related to quality and standards are discussed at Programme Management Committees, Assessment Boards, and other senior committees of the College, including the new Learning Teaching and Quality Committee.

1.38 The College has mapped its practice against Section A3.3 of the Quality Code. The College noted relevant practice and also the need to develop current systems further.

1.39 The review team concludes that the College, with the support of its awarding partners, operates effective monitoring and review processes that demonstrate whether UK threshold standards are achieved, and the academic standards of the awarding body are maintained. The Expectation A3.3 is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.40 Pearson and the University have ultimate responsibility for making use of external and independent expertise, through validation and review procedures, and through external examining and verifying, in order to set and maintain academic standards. The College is responsible for ensuring that it adheres to the expectations of the awarding partners. The QAH describes the criteria for, and role of, external advisers in programme approval.

1.41 For the newly approved franchise provision with the University, an approval panel, which includes external members, is required to confirm that the University's requirements for academic standards have been met. As yet, the University's policies and processes for external examiners have not been implemented as the franchised programmes are not yet running. However, the Responsibilities Checklist explains that the College will nominate suitable candidates as external examiners for the foundation degree programmes.

1.42 For the College's HND provision, Pearson appoints Standards Verifiers for each programme to review samples of assignment briefs and completed work, to produce annual reports and to review assessment processes.

1.43 The College's policies and processes for the use of independent and external expertise would allow Expectation A3.4 to be met. To test this, the review team considered a range of documentation including Responsibilities Checklists, the QAH, Standards Verifier reports, validation documentation, and minutes of internal assessment boards for Pearson provision. The review team also explored the College's approach in meetings with staff.

1.44 External panel members were involved in the approval of the three new foundation degrees.

1.45 Standards Verifier reports for HND provision demonstrate the role that externality plays in confirming the appropriateness of assessment design, assessment processes including marking and internal verification, and in the operation of Assessment and Internal Verification Boards, and Assessment and Progress Boards. Comments in the reports are considered and responded to in the CAMR, which is discussed and approved by Academic Board. Academic Board has external membership.

1.46 The review team concludes that independent and external expertise is used in the maintenance of standards. The Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

1.48 Of the seven Expectations in this judgement area, all are met, with the associated level of risk for each identified as low. There are no examples of good practice, recommendations or affirmations associated with this judgement area. Two recommendations, one relating to the College's approach to reasonable adjustments for students, and the other to the College's approach to assessment, are supported by findings in this area.

1.49 Nevertheless, as all Expectations in this area are met and the associated risks are low, the review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards at London Churchill College Ltd **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

2.1 Policies and procedures for the approval of new programmes and the amendment of existing programmes, together with roles and responsibilities, are set out in the QAH. These policies and procedures draw heavily upon University requirements. The Academic Board has oversight of programme development, including convening programme development teams.

2.2 The review team found that the College has policies and processes in place for the design, development and approval of programmes in order to facilitate meeting the relevant Expectation of the Quality Code.

2.3 In order to test the effectiveness of the College's procedures, the review team examined policy documents, handbooks and reports; read committee terms of reference and minutes; and reviewed the documentation associated with the approval of three new programmes. The review team met those responsible for, and involved in, programme design and approval.

2.4 The review team examined the documentation created during the approval of the Foundation Degree and a Level 6 top-up in Business Studies and the Foundation Degree in Hospitality and Events. The processes employed generally reflected those set out in the QAH and involved College and University staff, students and employers. Following institutional approval, a programme development team was set up by the Senior Academic Management Team (SAMT) and Academic Board to take the proposed programmes forward. The team, which involved both College and University staff, developed full programme proposals together with course and unit specifications and draft handbooks. These were discussed internally. Input was sought from employers. Progress was reported to the SMT and discussed at the Academic Board but documents were not signed off formally within the College. The documentation was presented to a validation panel at the University, which included an external academic and student representatives, operating under University procedures. The panel's conditions and recommendations were actioned by the College and signed off by the University. The College indicated that in future the internal phases of the development and approval of new programmes will follow more formally the detailed processes and procedures set out in the QAH. Staff development on topics relevant to design and development of programmes is planned.

2.5 The College has mapped its processes for design, development, approval and amendment of programmes against Section B1 of the Quality Code. The College concluded that its processes were effective, but identified a number of areas for development and indicated that the model would be reviewed prior to any further programme approval by the University. The oversight of progress against the mapping will be the responsibility of the newly formed Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC).

2.6 The policies and procedures set out in the QAH have so far only been tested against the approval of the franchised University provision. As yet, the procedures for making minor amendments to University programmes have not been needed. The College does not offer any locally devised units on its HND programmes. One change has been made to the selection of Pearson-defined modules offered on College programmes as a result of the approval of the foundation degrees. However, the College has indicated that it intends to review its Pearson provision in the light of the issuance of a new programme specification for one of the HNDs it offers. The College states that the processes documented in the QAH will apply equally to any development of its Pearson provision. However, the review team noted that the current guidance on design, development, approval and amendment of provision was not clearly signposted in relation to Pearson provision. The review team therefore **recommends** that the College develop and implement a process for the formal amendment of its provision, with specific attention to Pearson programmes.

2.7 The review team concludes that the College, in conjunction with its awarding partners, operates effective processes for the design, approval and amendment of programmes that allow the Expectation to be met, and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.8 The College reports that it follows admission processes that are aligned with the expectations of the Quality Code. Furthermore, its entry criteria conform to the requirements of the relevant awarding body and organisation. All academic staff and Admissions Officers are trained for their admissions role, including with respect to international qualifications. As part of the application process, the College takes account of a number of factors including previous qualifications and experience, a mandatory interview, and an English assessment in cases where an applicant has not completed their final two years of school in the English language. Students receive a short induction at the beginning of the HND courses that includes information about College facilities and services, their specific programme, and information regarding assessment, plagiarism and academic misconduct.

2.9 The College's documented policies and processes would enable the Expectation to be met. To test this, the review team considered a range of documentation including the Admissions Policy, the Information, Advice and Guidance Policy, admissions forms for Pearson and the University, induction materials, staff training documents, and Programme Handbooks. The College's admissions policy and practice was also discussed in meetings with staff and students.

2.10 The Admissions Policy, which was reviewed in February 2016, sets out relevant procedures and entry criteria for Pearson and University provision. It explains that all decisions for Pearson programmes must be made by the admissions team whereas decisions on admission to the new franchised programmes will rest with the University. Staff in any way involved with recruitment receive training in procedures while admissions staff have additional training on 'information, advice and guidance'. Students are able to appeal admissions decisions. Students expressed satisfied with the level and quality of information about admissions and recruitment.

2.11 Senior managers and staff involved in admissions stated that the Pearson Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Process is followed but also said that it had not been used recently for the admission of students. The QAH explains that claims for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are dealt with by Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Officers in the Admissions Department, and further guidance is available to staff and students on the portal. However, the review team found no information on RPL or APL on the College's admissions website for potential students. This is addressed further, and supports the recommendation, in Section B6.

2.12 At the point of enrolment there is a short induction programme which includes information about the course, study modes, the awarding body, student support services and academic misconduct information. Students are also supplied with programme handbooks, which help them to make informed decisions about their course. Students confirmed that they had received an induction.

2.13 The College undertakes analysis of applications data and academic performance against entry profile in a number of contexts, including at Assessment and Progress Boards. It has also recently introduced a performance tracking tool. The review team could find no evidence, however, of any systematic means employed by the College to review its admissions, enrolment and induction processes. Staff and student mentioned a very recent induction survey carried out in May 2016 but acknowledged that this was not a routine activity. The review team concludes that this is not a formal or regular process integral to College policy. Accordingly, the review team **recommends** that the College introduce a systematic means of evaluating student application, enrolment and induction procedures to help promote more effective organisational structures and processes for recruitment, selection and admission of students.

2.14 The College has procedures and policies in place to allow for the fair and transparent recruitment, admission and selection of students. Staff are appropriately trained and the College follows the processes of its awarding partners. Students receive a formal induction. The College does not routinely review its admissions and induction processes. Nevertheless, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.15 The College's Strategic Plan has five aims designed to support enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching. There is also a Learning and Teaching and Assessment Strategy with 13 strategic objectives which embrace teaching and learning, assessment, quality assurance and priorities related to employability. The Strategy covers staff development to support teaching and learning, including pedagogical and assessment skills, gaining higher level qualifications, and facilitation of scholarly activity. The commitment to teaching and learning is further articulated in the Staff Development Plan and a programme of College-led staff development activities. The College has reviewed its practice against chapter B3 of the Quality Code.

2.16 The College has arrangements in place to enable it to review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, and to thereby align with Expectation B3.

2.17 The review team considered a range of documents relating to this Expectation that included the Strategic Plan, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, the Staff Development Plan, minutes of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and the Annual Staff Development Record. Meetings were held with senior managers, academic and professional staff, and students.

2.18 The College's committee structure allows for consideration, monitoring and review of teaching, learning and assessment. Academic Board has oversight of learning and teaching with responsibility for developing and scrutinising relevant policies. It has oversight of the new Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC), which is responsible for monitoring quality assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching. The College's CAMR reviews aspects of learning, teaching and assessment as well as associated staffing and physical resources, and results in an action plan. In the 2014-15 CAMR staff development was identified as an area for improvement with action points specifying, among other things, the need for more varied teaching and assessment strategies, improvements to the recording of placement activity and enhancements to professional recognition arrangements for lecturers. An initial mapping of the College's approach against *Chapter B3* of the Quality Code was undertaken in September 2015.

2.19 Staff appointments are made in line with a standard model job description that makes reference to the academic requirements of the post, including engagement with scholarly activity. All staff, regardless of the nature of their contract, experience a staff induction programme and a mentor is provided.

2.20 The staff development programme for 2015-16 has covered themes including assessment for learning, academic communication and practice, integrating work-based learning, critical thinking and engagement with parts of the FHEQ. The review team heard that work is underway to strengthen capacity in the context of the new partnership with the University, particularly in respect to programme leader development. Staff development is recorded on an Annual Staff Development pro forma which is considered within the appraisal

process. Academic and professional staff met by the review team praised the quality and relevance of learning materials.

2.21 Peer review of teaching is undertaken and reported on an evaluation form which records observations and actions arising from the work. The College is intending to develop its approach further in response to University expectations.

2.22 The College has identified support for scholarly activity to support learning and teaching as part of its Enhancement Strategy. This builds on the findings of QAA's REO in 2012, which identified the active promotion of scholarly activity as a strength. Staff met by the review team were able to identify examples where support for scholarly activity had improved the quality of learning and teaching. The impact of scholarly activity will now be monitored by the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

2.23 There is a new Learning Resource Strategy designed to inform and guide the design, implementation, management and control of techniques, systems and assets available to support learning and teaching. The Strategy informs and monitors priorities for the use of learning and teaching technologies and teaching practice. The team heard that students benefit from a wide range of learning resources and that proposed estate development plans are expected to offer further opportunities. The CAMR also monitors the adequacy of learning resources and identifies actions to improve them. Students expressed general satisfaction with the range of learning resources, including the VLE, although they would like better book provision. The review team heard that resources are supplemented by an information specialist, who provides research and subject-specific skills to enable students to become effective independent learners.

2.24 There are policies and procedures in place which enable the College to review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices. Appropriate staff development arrangements are in place and staff are supported to engage in scholarly activity. Resources are appropriately allocated to support programmes offered. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.25 The College has a range of policies and procedures designed to help students develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy outlines the support given to students, including tutorials, individual learning planning and preparing for employment. It also states that student support is regularly reviewed at both the Academic Board and through Programme Committees, as well as by student representatives. The College has undertaken a mapping of its alignment with Expectation B4 to evaluate arrangements and resources, enabling students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

2.26 The policies and processes in place for supporting students would enable the College to meet Expectation B4. To test this, the review team considered documentation including the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and related policies, including the Equality and Diversity Policy and Personal Tutor Policy, and minutes of LTQC. The team also met staff and students.

2.27 Two Student Welfare Officers are responsible for providing pastoral support and guidance. The relevant staff are representative of the student population and thus have an awareness of specific cultural and community concerns and structures.

2.28 All students participate in a two-hour induction programme at the beginning of their course. The programme covers aspects of the student journey and sets out roles and responsibilities of students and staff. Students reported that the programme had been useful in providing necessary information.

2.29 The Personal Tutor Policy sets out expectations for the support of students. Personal Tutors review overall programme progress with individual students on a weekly basis and may provide immediate support for academic and study skills where required, as well as directing students towards other sources of advice and guidance. In addition, there is a programme of group tutorials to provide support for curriculum-related issues. The team heard that the College is developing a new system to provide staff and managers with enhanced access to key performance indicators for student activity in the form of a 'dashboard'. Both staff and students felt that the small size of the College also encouraged students to raise issues directly with staff.

2.30 Because many of the College's students are newly settled UK citizens, the College provides English language support to increase proficiency if students have not studied in English during their last two years in education.

2.31 The self-evaluation document, which was submitted as part of this review, does not mention College support for students with disabilities and nor was the team provided with evidence of a formal, documented policy or procedure describing such support. However, in meetings with the review team, staff stated that prospective students are invited to declare disabilities at enrolment or once they have embarked on their course, but are usually reluctant to do so. Furthermore, academic staff, who said that they had been provided with relevant staff development, are encouraged to look out specifically for signs of learning disabilities to enable support arrangements to be put in place. The College's Student Welfare Officer is then responsible for putting appropriate measures in place to meet

students' identified support needs. Senior managers acknowledged that the College does not have a formal policy to identify and support students with disabilities, including learning support needs, and tends to rely on informal processes in responding to students. The College was intending to appoint a specialist member of staff but recruitment to a post had not yet taken place. The team was informed that there is also some liaison with a local mental health organisation.

2.32 Likewise, the College does not have a formal policy and procedures in place to subsequently make adjustments for students who have declared learning support needs. The Handbook for Academic Staff Teaching advises staff that students with additional needs will have an Additional Support for Learning Needs (ASLN) plan in place. The review team was informed, though, that a student's learning programme and assessment schedule are typically adjusted as the programme proceeds rather than adjustments being planned from its start. Any students with identified additional support needs are required to complete a separate extenuating circumstances form for each assessment and for each taught unit in order to be given an extension to the submission date. However, an Extenuating Circumstances Policy, dated April 2016 but not included in the February 2016 edition of the Quality Handbook, states that 'ongoing conditions and other disabilities are normally considered under separate regulations and thus should not fall within the confines of this definition... [except] when there is a specific 'flare up' in their condition at the time of the assessment'. The team was unable to find any reference to this process in other College guidance on assessment. The review team concludes that the College's arrangements are confusing for students and that it does not have formal and fair policy and procedures for handling necessary adjustments in place. Accordingly, the review team **recommends** that the College should strengthen and publish the policies and procedures for the effective and equitable identification and support of students with additional needs.

2.33 Reports from plagiarism-detection software, linked to the VLE, are used effectively to facilitate academic skills development, including with respect to understanding of academic misconduct. Academic staff reported that there has been a reduction in incidents of detected plagiarism due to enhancements to the induction programme and the integration of explicit study and academic skills into programmes.

2.34 The College is committed to promoting student employability. The Learning and Teaching Strategy and a new Placement and Work-based Learning Policy articulate the placement priorities for HND programmes as set out in the Pearson Responsibilities Checklist. A new Head of Employability has been appointed to develop employability and employer engagement. The College encourages students to take up placements and internships but there is a mandatory 200 hours work placement on the HND Health and Social Care. The review team noted that the College's approach to the management of student placements has consistently left some students with insufficient placement hours to meet the mandatory elements of this programme and thus unable to complete within normal duration. This is explored further in Section B10.

2.35 The College has a range of policies and procedures in place designed to help students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy frames support given to students, including via personal tutorials, English language support and preparation for employment. Students were appreciative of the College's approach, which they felt helped to facilitate their development and achievement. Formal policy and processes for the identification and support of students with additional learning support needs are not, however, in place. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.36 Student engagement is defined within the Student Engagement Strategy. There is a Student Engagement Working Group, set up in September 2015, to help implement the Strategy. The College has mapped its approach against the relevant section of the Quality Code.

2.37 There is a student representative system designed both to capture formally the student voice in promoting improvement of learning opportunities, and to offer a medium by which responses can be communicated to students. Student representatives are recruited annually and supported by the Student Representation Coordinator, who provides training. There are student members of Academic Board and each of the Programme Committees.

2.38 The College's described approach to student engagement enables Expectation B5 to be met. To evaluate the College's approach, the review team considered a range of documents including the Student Experience Strategy, a Student Representative Guide, student representative training materials, a Student Engagement tool, evidence of 'You Said, We Did' and other communication with students, Academic Board Minutes, responses to surveys, terms of reference and minutes of programme-level committees, and the student submission. Meetings were held with academic and professional staff and students.

2.39 In line with the Student Engagement Strategy, each level of all courses has a student representative. The role and its responsibilities are clearly defined within the Student Representative Guide. The Guide also provides details of the programme committee and its membership, key contacts, and useful information on developing skills such as communication, planning and negotiations. Training and support is provided by College staff, who also monitor attendance of representatives. The team heard that the College also adopts informal means of contact, including an Informal Discussion Form, to collect student opinions.

2.40 There is a student feedback questionnaire which is used to gather students' views on all individual units, the report of which is discussed at programme committees. A post study survey collects feedback from students who have completed their programme.

2.41 There is student representation and participation on Academic Board and at Programme Committee meetings. The review team was made aware of students raising issues and receiving responses in both arenas.

2.42 Further to the 2012 REO report, QAA annual monitoring reports include positive comments on the College's approach to student engagement. A recently convened Student Sounding Board (SSB) has worked with students by adapting the NUS Benchmarking Tool to reviewing the College's approach to student engagement.

2.43 The College has developed, and is implementing, a Student Engagement Strategy. There is a defined approach to student representation and trained representatives participate at committees and gain responses to issues raised. The College is now moving towards reviewing the effectiveness of its processes. The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.44 The College's role in assessment differs between its awarding partners. The role of the College in relation to University programmes is currently limited to the secure administration of University examinations on College premises. In future, the College will be involved in the setting and marking of assessments and the provision of feedback to students in line with the University's Collaborative Procedures Manual. The University will administer some processes, such as those related to academic offences, and will chair Boards of Examiners. The College is taking steps to ensure that staff are trained for their new roles on University programmes. In relation to its Pearson provision, the College is responsible for the setting, marking, internal verification and provision of student feedback on its HND programmes, in line with Pearson regulations and guidance.

2.45 The College has a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy in place which includes a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy. The Strategy states that all assessments of student work are undertaken in accordance with the Assessment Policy of the College. It states further that this Policy reflects the requirements of the College's awarding partners and ensures the fair and equitable treatment of students. In addition, it notes that the Policy works in conjunction with other College policies and procedures, but in the event of a conflict the Assessment Policy takes precedence.

2.46 The College has a number of other policies in place that relate to assessment. These include the Policy on Assessment, Exemption, Appeal, Malpractice and Adjustment, commonly referred to by the College as the Assessment Policy, LCC Exam Regulations, Extenuating Circumstances Policy, Academic Disciplinary Policy and Procedures, and Internal Verification Procedure, as well as guidance on policies and procedures contained within the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH), LCC Tutor's Handbook, and student handbooks. Oversight of all policies related to assessment is the responsibility of the Academic Board. The College indicated that the Policy on Assessment, Exemption, Appeal, Malpractice and Adjustment had not been reviewed recently and was likely to be discontinued. Some of the College's policies refer specifically to the University and Pearson; others are generic.

2.47 The review team found that the College has a range of policies and processes in place related to assessment and recognition of prior learning which are intended to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes, and to underpin the award of credit and qualifications.

2.48 In order to test the effectiveness of the College's policies and procedures the review team read College policies and regulations; handbooks for staff and students; regulations and guidance provided by Pearson; terms of reference and minutes of College committees; the contract with the University; information about staff development activities; and the College's mapping of its processes against the Quality Code. The team examined the policies and advice available to prospective students on the web and the information available to staff and students on the VLE. During the review the team discussed assessment policies and practices with staff and students.

2.49 The review team found that the College has effective policies and procedures for setting assessments, marking, verification and providing feedback to students on its HND programmes. College staff set assignment to test students' achievement of the learning outcomes prescribed in the Pearson specifications. All work is submitted online and through anti-plagiarism software before marking. Staff undertake a first marking of students' work, which is then subject to a process of internal verification. Marks are confirmed and the internal assessment processes reviewed by the external Standards Verifier. The review team saw samples of assignment briefs and feedback to students; both were of high quality. Feedback must be provided within 25 working days. The University franchised provision will be subject to a tighter turnaround and the College is considering lowering the limit for the Pearson provision. Students who met the review team confirmed that the requirements for individual assessments were clear and that they receive timely and helpful feedback.

2.50 In response to student demands for more advice on the difference between pass, merit and distinction-level work in a particular context, Expected Answer Guidelines (EAGs) have been introduced which show what would be expected from students for different levels of pass for each assignment. Students welcome these and find them helpful. The EAGs, which support students in understanding what should be demonstrated for the achievement of learning outcomes, are **good practice**.

2.51 The College holds an Assessment and Progress Board, chaired by the Director of Higher Education. It meets quarterly to consider grades, reports on extenuating circumstances and academic misconduct, and other matters to do with assessment. Reports from the external Standards Verifiers are positive and suggestions for improvement are acted upon effectively. These reports are discussed at programme committees and feed into the Annual Monitoring review and the Academic Board. Guidance is provided to staff on good practice in assessment and is the subject of staff development events.

2.52 The review team explored policies, processes, and practice in relation to specific aspects of assessment in order to assess the appropriateness, clarity, coherence and consistent application of policies. The areas explored were extenuating circumstances, reasonable adjustments, the recognition of prior learning, and academic misconduct. These are areas where Pearson, and in the future the University, expect the College to have its own policies in place, framed appropriately to conform with the provider's guidance. The review team also looked at the quality of information provided to staff and students about these processes.

2.53 The College has an Extenuating Circumstances Policy outside the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy, which defines extenuating circumstances, indicates the circumstances which may be considered extenuating, and sets out a process to be followed by students. This policy applies only to HND students. University students are referred to University policies and processes, which differ from those in place at the College. HND students are required to submit evidence of the problems that have affected them. Applications are reviewed by a panel of academic staff chaired by someone other than the chair of the Assessment and Progress Board to whom decisions are reported. The policy is referred to in the Student Handbook and is available on the VLE. Staff guidance requires Programme Leaders to ensure that students have correct advice on extenuating circumstances and reminds tutors to refer students to Unit Leaders and Course Coordinators for assistance. Unit leaders are able to give extensions of up to two weeks without penalty for valid reasons outside the Extenuating Circumstances procedure. However, student handbooks for HND programmes available on the VLE suggest that this is not the case. The QAH states that the Extenuating Circumstances Process is the responsibility of the Academic Registry: this is not mentioned elsewhere. The review panel noted that the principle outcome for HND students when extenuating circumstances are accepted is an additional extension of up to five weeks. Students who met the review panel are confused

about the process, in particular whether or not their marks are capped when an extension is granted.

2.54 Pearson allows centres to use a process termed recognition of prior learning (RPL), which allows students to demonstrate the meeting of assessment requirements for a unit at a pass level through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have. RPL on Pearson programmes covers both accreditation of prior learning (APL) and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) RPL does not cover exceptional entry or exemptions. Pearson also has policies that allow for credit accumulation and transfer. APL will be permitted for the University foundation degrees, for which training is planned.

2.55 The College stated that RPL is seldom used because of the demographic profile of its students. The review team found that the College uses the terminology for accreditation of prior learning in a confusing way and that the information it makes available to staff and students is limited. For example, the Policy on Assessment, Exemption, Appeal, Malpractice and Adjustment gives details of RPL and APL including exemptions and credit transfer. The QAH does not refer to RPL but recognises various forms of APL. As noted in Section B2, it states that claims are administered by APL Officers in the Admissions Department and that further guidance is available to staff and students on the portal. The review team found no information or guidance on RPL or APL on the College's admissions website for potential students. The Admissions Policy and the draft LCC Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Update use the term APEL to mean different things - non-traditional entry criteria and exemptions. No reference could be found in the prospectus, staff or student handbooks to RPL, APL or credit transfer and the processes by which these are addressed.

2.56 The identification and support for students with additional needs has been discussed in section B4 of this report, which contains a recommendation to strengthen and publish policies and procedures for the effective and equitable identification and support of students with additional needs. College policies for assessment make a number of references to making reasonable adjustments for such students. However, the review team found that these were not always consistent and were not always reflected in practice (see paragraphs 2.58-59). Some of the key posts and services referred to in College policies such as the Disability Adviser and Dyslexia Services are not yet in place.

2.57 The Student Handbook states that students are required to declare additional needs at the time of application. The College offers such students adjustments for taking examinations and may offer additional time to hand in assignments, for which students need to complete an extenuating circumstances form. The Extenuating Circumstances Policy, however, as noted at 2.32, states that 'ongoing conditions and other disabilities are normally considered under separate regulations and thus should not fall within the confines of this definition...[except] when there is a specific 'flare up' in their condition at the time of the assessment'. The review team considered this advice confusing.

2.58 Teaching staff are advised to expect students with additional needs to have an Additional Support for Learning Needs (ASLN) plan in place. However, the College stated that students are reluctant to reveal additional needs and thus staff are encouraged to explore whether reasonable adjustments are required through observing students, grading work, and tutorial discussions. The review team heard of a number of individual arrangements made for students in this way. There is further coverage of the College's approach to the identification and support of students with additional needs at paragraphs 2.31-32.

2.59 The College has an Academic Disciplinary Policy and Procedure which covers all forms of academic malpractice. The policy states that it relates to both Pearson and University students, although the contract with University indicates that students on

University programmes are dealt with by the University. Where academic misconduct is suspected an Academic Concern/Offence form is completed and passed to the Academic Discipline Coordinator with appropriate evidence. Where the offence is one of suspected plagiarism the relevant head of department decides whether the infringement is potentially an offence or a case of poor scholarship. The latter is dealt with at a formal meeting between the student and the member of academic staff identifying the issue. All potential offences are heard by an Academic Conduct Panel of three members of staff, who have discretion over any penalty imposed.

2.60 References to similar processes are found in the Student Handbook although there is no direct reference to the Academic Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. The Policy on Assessment, Exemption, Appeal, Malpractice and Adjustment also refers to a broadly similar process. Academic misconduct is not referred to in the QAH or the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The review team considered that more cross-referencing would be helpful to both staff and students.

2.61 The College has mapped its assessment process against *Chapter B6* of the Quality Code. The mapping indicates a number of areas where a more in-depth analysis of practice could be beneficial in addition to the areas where the College itself has identified the need for action. The newly formed Learning Teaching and Quality Committee is responsible for taking the proposed actions forward.

2.62 As noted in paragraphs 2.53-2.61, the review team found that the College's policies relevant to assessment lack clarity, transparency and accessibility. Some policies seem to contradict others. In order to ensure that assessment and the recognition of prior learning is operated in an equitable, valid and reliable way the review team **recommends** that the College publish assessment policies which are clear, comprehensive, consistent and appropriately targeted towards defined student groups.

2.63 The review team concludes that the College, in conjunction with its awarding organisation, Pearson, operates effective policies and procedures for the setting and marking of student work that demonstrate the extent to which students have achieved intended learning outcomes. However, in relation to those aspects of assessment and recognition of prior learning where the College is expected to have its own policies in place that complement the regulations of the provider, the College's overarching assessment policies and regulations lack clarity, coherence and accessibility. The team was of the view that this could prejudice the equitable treatment of students, particularly those with additional needs, extenuating circumstances, or seeking opportunities to benefit from recognition of prior learning. As a result, the review team concludes that the is not met and the level of risk in this area is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.64 The QAH states that external examining is important in maintaining comparable academic standards and contributing to the enhancement and development of programmes. The College has undertaken a mapping exercise to Expectation B7 and concluded that basic structures and processes are in place. External examiner processes are overseen by Academic Board and the new Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

2.65 For its HNDs, the College operates an external examiner system in accordance with Pearson regulations on Standards Verifiers, who are appointed by Pearson to oversee the academic standards of programmes and to provide an external perspective. They visit the College annually to review samples of assignment briefs and completed work, as well as to engage with staff and students. Their role and associated procedures are summarised in the QAH.

2.66 The role of the College in relation to external examiners on University programmes is currently very limited. In future the College will be involved in responding to reports in line with the University's Collaborative Procedures Manual.

2.67 The College's approach to the use of external examiners enables the Expectation to be met. To test this, the review team considered a range of documents relating to the Expectation including the Responsibilities Checklists, the QAH, Standards Verifier reports, the CAMR and action plan, and the minutes of Academic Board. Meetings were also held with academic staff and students.

2.68 Standards Verifiers complete a pro forma that requires them to review progress in implementing the action plan arising from the last visit. They also confirm academic standards have been met and evaluate resources provided to deliver the programme. Programme Committees include responses to Standards Verifiers' reports in REP reports which are then sent to the Standards Verifiers. Required actions are recorded in action plans which are tracked by Programme Committees for consideration with the Standards Verifier the following year.

2.69 All issues raised by Standards Verifiers are reported in the CAMR, which has an overarching action plan that is considered by Academic Board. Generic issues are thereby identified across external examiner reports. The 2014-15 report identified the quality of feedback to students as an issue and this resulted in staff development being scheduled. All reports are also considered by the Director of Higher Education prior to consideration at Academic Board.

2.70 Students are provided with access to the full Standards Verifiers reports via the VLE. The reports are also discussed at Programme Committees where students are represented.

2.71 The review team concludes that the College makes use of Standards Verifiers reports and that improvements to programmes have arisen as a result of actions taken in response to reports. The College has effective processes for sharing the content of reports with relevant staff and students. The team identified how Standards Verifiers reports had informed the provision of relevant staff development. Accordingly, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.72 The Academic Board is responsible for approving and reviewing procedures to routinely monitor and periodically review programmes. Policies and procedures for the annual monitoring of programmes are set out in the QAH. The CAMR draws upon various inputs including student performance data, unit and programme reports, student feedback and external review. The process also leads to the development of action plans. The College does not have a process for periodic review.

2.73 The review team found that the College has policies and processes in place for the monitoring of its programmes in order to maintain standards and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

2.74 In order to test the effectiveness of the College's procedures the review team examined policy documents and handbooks; read monitoring and review reports and action plans; looked at committee minutes and responsibilities; saw a mapping document; and met those responsible for, and involved in, annual monitoring and review.

2.75 The College has effective procedures in place for the annual monitoring of its HND provision, albeit involving somewhat different processes from those outlined in the QAH. Unit leaders complete Unit Reviews, which cover student performance and behaviour, student feedback, reflection on content, resources, assessment, and areas for improvement. At the next level, programme leaders complete REP reports on a semester basis, which are presented to the Programme Committee, including student representatives. These reports include data and reflection on student performance; outcomes of peer review of teaching; enhancement, good practice and innovation; student feedback; and issues extracted from external examiners' reports together with the College's response and planned actions.

2.76 Both unit reviews and REPs inform the CAMR. The CAMR covers all HND provision and includes a summary of action taken in relation to the previous year's CAMR; data and reflection on student recruitment and performance; areas of good practice and areas of concern related to each programme; teaching quality and training; and an action plan. The CAMR and its action plan are discussed at senior committees of the College, including Senior Management Team and Academic Board. The College has taken action to enhance its annual monitoring processes over recent times and indicated that further enhancements to data are planned, and that the possibility of more direct involvement of employers and professional and support services in annual monitoring was being considered. In future, the College will also prepare annual monitoring reports in line with University requirements, which will impact the overall pattern of annual monitoring undertaken by the College.

2.77 The College states that its awarding partners are responsible for periodic review. The QAH does not refer to policies or procedures related to periodic review of programmes. The requirements of periodic review by University have not yet been embedded. Staff who met the review team indicated that the recent issue of a new programme specification for business studies by Pearson might lead to a limited periodic review of some HND provision, although the precise form this might take was undecided. The review team considered that the College would benefit from agreeing procedures for engagement with University periodic review processes and for reviewing formally its HND provision on a periodic basis.

The review team therefore **recommends** that the College develop and implement a procedure for periodic review of all of its provision.

2.78 The QAH does not contain policies or procedures related to the closure of units or programmes. The legal agreement with the University contains clauses which refer to processes to safeguard the interests of students in the event of closure of University programmes.

2.79 The College has mapped its practices against *Chapter 8* of the Quality Code. It concluded that basic structures and processes were in place but further development and embedding were desirable.

2.80 The review team concludes that the College, in conjunction with its awarding partners, operates effective processes for the monitoring of its provision that allow the Expectation to be met, and that the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.81 The College has an Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and a Student Complaints Policy and Procedure, both of which were introduced in January 2016. There is also a Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure which was updated at the same time. The documents can be accessed via the College website, with information being included in the HND Student Handbooks and via the University VLE for the foundation degrees. Students can receive advice from Personal Tutors, lecturers and Student Welfare Officers on the complaints and appeals procedures. The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure makes students aware that they can refer a complaint to the OIA if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal. The College endeavours to resolve issues informally without recourse to formal procedures.

2.82 The College's policies and processes on academic appeals and student complaints enable it to meet Expectation B9. To assess the College's approach, the review team considered the College policies and procedures, Student Handbooks, and a record of appeals. The team also met students and staff with a responsibility for appeals and complaints.

2.83 The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure sets out a two-stage process of informal and formal complaint, and specifies timelines and responsibilities of staff and students. A final process allows students to complain directly to the Principal. The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure sets out the grounds for appeal, timelines and responsibilities. It notes that students on a University programme will be able to receive support from the University and its Students' Union. The Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure describes a framework for the seriousness of complaints and misconduct with appropriate actions.

2.84 Information on appeals and complaints is available in Course Handbooks, on the College website and on the VLE. It is also provided at induction. Staff and students were aware of policy and processes for appeals and complaints. There have been 28 appeals and no complaints within the last academic session.

2.85 The College maintains a log of academic appeals and student complaints. The review team was informed that processes are reviewed at Academic Board and that a 'short-life working group' on appeals and complaints had been convened.

2.86 The College makes information on appeals and complaints available in various ways. Both students and staff are able to demonstrate an understanding of processes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.87 The College has a Work Placement Policy and a Student Work-related Learning Handbook, both introduced in January 2016 in preparation for the delivery of foundation degrees. The Handbook states that working in a placement setting, whether as an employee or a volunteer, provides students with an opportunity for work experience that may be used to respond to work-related learning elements of the programme. The HND in Health and Social Care has a mandatory placement where students are required to complete 200 hours in a relevant setting.

2.88 The College's policies and procedures in place for the management of placements have the capacity to facilitate the meeting of Expectation B10.

2.89 To evaluate the effectiveness of the College's approach, the review team scrutinised documentation including the Placement and Work-based Learning Policy: Foundation Degrees, the Student Work-related Learning Handbook, programme handbooks, external examiners' reports, the student submission, and the minutes of Academic Board. The team also met managers, academic and professional staff, students, and employers.

2.90 The review team heard that for the HNDs in Business and in Hospitality Management, placements and internships are voluntary, with the College encouraging students to participate. The HND Health and Social Care has a mandatory placement, although the Programme Handbook makes little reference to the requirement and provides no information on how placements are managed. The Placement and Work-based Learning Policy contains guidance on roles and responsibilities, and pro formas for checking on health and safety. It also contains a tripartite agreement template, introduced in September 2015, for the College, the student and the placement provider to complete. However, the guidance is directed at foundation degree students and it was unclear to what extent it was being followed for HND students.

2.91 The Student Work-related Learning Handbook states that the College will assist students in finding relevant placements. However, it became evident from a Work Placement database that some HND Health and Social Care students had not found, nor embarked on, a placement even though they were approaching the end of their two-year programme. In this context, they would not be able to complete their programmes and would need to be deferred. Students confirmed difficulties in securing placements on this programme. It became apparent that the provision of mandatory work placements on this programme has been of concern for some time. The 2013-14 and 2014-15 Standards Verifier reports had highlighted that there was a need to address the provision of work placements in order for students to meet the programme's mandatory requirements. Academic Board had also discussed students' difficulties in securing appropriate placements.

2.92 In response, the REP report for 2014-15 had specified that student hours on placement should be recorded in a log. The 2014-15 Standards Verifier report noted that placement provision was being reviewed and personal tutors were now helping students find placements. The review team was told that, in future, students will be required to commence placements in their first year of study although the Programme Handbook stated that this

was already the case. [956]. The College had also recently specified a member of lecturing staff to act as a Work Placement Coordinator, with responsibility for the operational management of work placements and assuring their quality. However, this role is not mentioned in the most recent College guidance. Despite these responses, senior managers confirmed that a significant number of current students approaching the end of their two-year programme had still not commenced a placement and did not have the placement hours enabling them to meet the mandatory elements of their programme, so that the award of the Diploma could not be made by the planned date of completion.

2.93 The review team noted that the College had discussed the problem and had made some efforts to help affected students. However, despite the College's recognition of the comparatively long-standing difficulty it was not yet clear to the review team that its actions were likely to result in all students graduating on time. Further, while the introduction of a Placement and Work-based Learning Policy for Foundation degrees was potentially useful, the team also noted that the Programme Handbook for Health and Social Care does not include effective guidance on student placements. In conclusion, the team was not convinced that the College yet has a fully operational system for managing mandatory placements and work-based learning. In the light of this, and the fact that over a third of the College's students could be affected, the team **recommends** that the College should strengthen oversight and operational management of students' mandatory work placements.

2.94 The review team concludes that the College has emerging arrangements for the management of placement learning with others. However, the procedures for ensuring that students are able to meet mandatory placement requirements in a timely way are not currently effective. The Expectation is therefore not met and the level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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*

2.95 London Churchill College does not offer research degrees. Therefore, the Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.97 The review team identified one feature of good practice relating to Expected Answer Guidelines, which support students in understanding what should be demonstrated for the achievement of learning outcomes.

2.98 Of the 10 applicable Expectations in Part B, the review team concludes that eight of these are met and two are not met, both of those not met being judged a moderate risk. Furthermore, of the Expectations met, one other is judged to be moderate risk.

2.99 In relation to the Expectations not met the review team has made two recommendations: one relating to the need for the College to publish assessment policies and procedures which are clear, comprehensive, consistent and appropriately targeted towards defined student groups; and the other regarding the need to strengthen oversight and operational management of students' mandatory work placements.

2.100 In relation to the Expectation met but judged to be a moderate risk, the review team has made one recommendation in respect to strengthening and publishing the policies and procedures for the effective and equitable identification and support of students with additional needs.

2.101 The review team has also made three recommendations where the Expectation is met and judged to be a low risk. These relate to developing and implementing a process for the formal amendment of College provision; introducing a systematic means of evaluating student application, enrolment and induction procedures; and developing and implementing a procedure for periodic review of College provision.

2.102 Based on the number of Expectations not met and judged to be a moderate risk, the Expectation met but moderate risk and the total number of recommendations, the review team concludes that the quality of learning opportunities at the College **requires improvement** to meet 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 College publishes information about its higher education provision, facilities and services on its website, social media websites, and the VLE, as well as in the prospectus. Public information is managed via a Public Information Policy. The SMT has overall responsibility for the accuracy of information, which it exercises via directors and relevant academic managers. Final approval of published information is given by Academic Board. There are version control policies and procedures to maintain the currency of documents.

3.2 Information included in Subject Handbooks is sourced from Pearson's definitive records and includes course structure, entry qualifications and programme specifications. Handbooks are approved by senior managers before being published on the VLE for students and staff. Wider information about how the College operates and manages its public information is also included within the QAH, which includes a Public Information Policy.

3.3 Adherence to the policies and processes in place would enable the College to meet the Expectation. The review team scrutinised various documents including prospectuses, the Public Information Policy, the Quality Handbook, the Strategic Plan, course handbooks, and admissions and applications information. The College also demonstrated the VLE, where much of the information is lodged. This information was augmented by meetings with managers, academic and support staff, and students.

3.4 Responsibilities for management of information are set out in the Public Information Policy, which includes a flowchart detailing the process for signing off published information. The Senior Management Team (SMT) has responsibility for securing the accuracy of information, with departments required to sign off proposed changes formally. The Policy is reviewed annually by SMT and Academic Board. Relevant staff demonstrated understanding of College requirements. An Information Security Policy, owned by the Information Security Officer, was introduced in March 2016 and covers management of information systems.

3.5 The College website publishes the Academic Appeals Policy, the Student Complaints Policy, the Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Disciplinary Policy. Admissions information, including fee information and enrolment terms and conditions, is also available. There are links to various organisations including the Student Loans Company and the University. A student portal is accessed via the website. The College supplied a College mission statement but this does not appear on the website.

3.6 The VLE is used to provide students with general assessment submission advice and dates, guidance on study skills including referencing and avoidance of academic misconduct, and information about student support. There is a Module Area where students obtain information on assessment tasks and can view archive resources relating to their studies. Expected Answer Guidelines (EAGs) allow students to gain a better understanding of requirements for achieving the learning outcomes and specific grades. EAGs are cited as

a feature of good practice in section B6. Academic staff have been set a minimum level of engagement with the VLE. Students expressed satisfaction with the quality of information on the VLE and the extent of engagement from academic staff.

3.7 Course handbooks, which are updated annually, contain comprehensive information on modules and the overall course, modes of study, methods of assessment, staff contact information and wider College information. While the student submission expressed concern about the currency of the College calendar, students met by the review team were satisfied with the level and accuracy of information in handbooks and confirmed their usefulness.

3.8 The review team formed the view that the College produces accessible and accurate information for prospective and current students in digital and printed formats and via the VLE. There is a clear procedure for the sign off of information which ensures oversight by senior management. Course handbooks are comprehensive and are valued by students. Staff are aware of the requirements of Pearson and the University. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.10 The Expectation in this section is met and the associated risk level is low. There are no areas of good practice, recommendations or affirmations recorded in this judgement area.

3.11 Given that the applicable Expectation is met, with a low level of risk, the review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at London Churchill College Ltd **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 College has recently published a new Strategic Plan. In addition, the College has in place a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, a Student Experience Strategy, and an Enhancement Strategy. Enhancement responsibilities are found in the terms of reference of College committees; enhancement is identified and discussed in monitoring and review reports, and is found on the agendas of a number of committees. The College has action plans that are developed from annual monitoring reports which, in turn, focus on improvement, as well as high level strategic planning.

4.2 The review team found that the College has structures and processes in place which are designed to promote the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

4.3 In order to assess the effectiveness of the College's approach to improving the quality of students' learning opportunities the review team read strategic documents and plans; examined committee terms of reference and minutes; and discussed the topic of enhancement with staff and students.

4.4 The Enhancement Strategy defines the College's approach to enhancement. It relates this strategy to other College strategies, and to quality assurance processes. The document identifies three areas for enhancement: learning and teaching, student support, and externality and external reputation. The responsibility for delivering the Enhancement Strategy lies with the Academic Board, the SMT and the SAMT. The SAMT is responsible for identifying enhancements, developing an enhancement plan, implementing the plan, and monitoring, evaluating and reviewing activity. These responsibilities are reflected to some extent in the SAMT's terms of reference. As yet an enhancement plan has not yet been developed. SAMT is supposed to receive and act upon feedback from a Quality Circle's deliberations on issues and enhancement practices, but as yet only one un-minuted meeting of the Circle has been held.

4.5 Staff who met the review team emphasised the role of the College's Strategic Plan in setting priorities for enhancement. The team heard that enhancement activities were guided by the Strategic Plan and developed in consultation with students. New priorities were identified through annual monitoring. The new Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC) would be central to ensuring that enhancement activity in the College was integrated. The current College Strategy and its attached Plan focus on high level aims related to marketing, acquisition of taught degree awarding powers and resources. Achievement of the Strategy's aims is through supporting and underpinning strategies; however, the Enhancement Strategy is not identified as one of them.

4.6 The College encourages a culture of engagement on the part of staff and students and acts responsively to issues and suggestions that are raised. The review team heard of many examples of enhancement that had come about in this way. Staff identified opportunities to share ideas and good practice through staff meetings, staff development activities and peer review. Current enhancement activities identified by senior staff that met the review team included the development of learning resources, increased scholarship among teaching staff, refurbishment of premises and the personal tutor scheme. Students who met the review team confirmed that the College was responsive to feedback and cited

examples of recent improvements such as changes to the VLE and better assignment briefs that came about as a result of student input.

4.7 The review team concludes that the College encourages continuous improvement; follows up monitoring reports and student feedback in order to identify opportunities for enhancement; and has mechanisms in place to identify and disseminate good practice. However, the College's strategic guidance of enhancement and integration of enhancement initiatives in a systematic and planned manner is less visible, partly because of recent changes in governance and partly because of the lack of integration of College policy documents. Many of the policies are new and key structural elements, such as LTQC, are very recent. The review team considers that despite a commitment to continuous improvement, without better coordination the College cannot be seen to be taking deliberate steps at College level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. The review team **recommends** that the College embed and monitor its strategy for enhancement to ensure that it is systematic, planned and coordinated.

4.8 The review team concludes that the College takes deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. The Expectation is met, but because of a lack of policy coordination and planning the associated risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.9 In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.10 The review team took account of the College's commitment to improvement, exemplified in its recent development of strategies oriented to the enhancement of learning opportunities. However, the lack of policy coordination and planning gives rise to a recommendation regarding the need for the College to embed and monitor its strategy for enhancement to ensure that it is systematic, planned and coordinated.

4.11 In this context, the review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The College recognises the central importance of employers in enhancing the employability of its students and the quality of their learning opportunities. The Employability Strategy sets out ways in which employers can engage with the College, and these articulate directly with the Strategic Plan objectives. The Learning and Teaching Strategy and a new Placement and Work-based Learning Policy articulate the placement priorities for HND programmes, as set out in the Pearson Responsibilities Checklist. The College has recently appointed a Head of Employability to oversee the Employability Strategy and its implementation. The post holder is also expected to oversee relationships between the College and local authorities, Chambers of Commerce and a new Employer Forum.

5.2 There is a commitment to embedding employability across the curriculum and supporting students in obtaining employment. The College seeks to involve employers in programme design. The University Responsibilities Checklist requires the College to engage regularly with employers when developing programmes. The review team heard that a member of the Employer Forum (see paragraph 5.5) had been consulted about the development of a foundation degree.

5.3 The Work Placement Policy and its implementation is supported by a Student Work-related Handbook, which explains that working in a placement setting, whether as an employee or as a volunteer, provides students with an opportunity for work experience that may be used to respond to work-related learning elements of the programme. An Employability Centre has recently been established to support this. As the College extends its higher education portfolio it intends to address local employment needs by widening participation and meeting the skills needs of the area.

5.4 One of the HND courses has a mandatory placement. The College is still developing its approach to assuring the quality of work placements (see Sections B4 and B10) but a Work Placement Coordinator has recently been appointed to manage placement arrangements.

5.5 The Employer Forum has met on two occasions and brings together local employers and students. The latter have an opportunity to hear about employers' expectations regarding employability, for example, interpersonal skills. Currently, the College does not have a process for more generally gathering the views of employers in its implementation of the Employability Strategy and their views are not considered within annual monitoring and review.

5.6 Students met by the review team are positive about the extent to which their courses promote employability. However, they confirmed that, while work placements can be useful, more support needs to be provided for finding and assuring work placements.

Glossary

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

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

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

Academic standards

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

Award

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

Blended learning

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

Credit(s)

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

Degree-awarding body

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

Distance learning

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

See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award

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

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

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

Expectations

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

Flexible and distributed learning

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

See also **distance learning**.

Framework

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

Framework for higher education qualifications

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

Good practice

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

Learning opportunities

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

Learning outcomes

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

Multiple awards

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

Operational definition

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

Programme (of study)

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

Programme specifications

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

Public information

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

Quality Code

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

Reference points

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

Subject Benchmark Statement

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

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

Threshold academic standard

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

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

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

Widening participation

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

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