Institutional audit

London Metropolitan University

November 2010

Preface

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

In England and Northern Ireland QAA conducts Institutional audits on behalf of the higher education sector to provide public information about the maintenance of academic standards and assurance of the quality of learning opportunities provided for students. It also operates under contract to the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in Northern Ireland to provide evidence to meet their statutory obligations to assure the quality and standards of academic programmes for which they disburse public funding. The audit method was developed in partnership with the funding councils and the higher education representative bodies, and agreed following consultation with higher education institutions and other interested organisations.
The method was endorsed by the former Department for Education and Skills. It was revised in 2006 following recommendations from the Quality Assurance Framework Review Group, a representative group established to review the structures and processes of quality assurance in England and Northern Ireland, and to evaluate the work of QAA.

Institutional audit is an evidence-based process carried out through peer review. It forms part of the Quality Assurance Framework established in 2002 following revisions to the United Kingdom's approach to external quality assurance. At the centre of the process is an emphasis on students and their learning.

The aims of the revised Institutional audit process are to meet the public interest in knowing that universities and colleges in England and Northern Ireland have:

- effective means of ensuring that the awards and qualifications in higher education are of an academic standard at least consistent with those referred to in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and are, where relevant, exercising their powers as degree-awarding bodies in a proper manner
- effective means of providing learning opportunities of a quality that enables students, whether on taught or research programmes, to achieve those higher education awards and qualifications
- effective means of enhancing the quality of their educational provision, particularly by building on information gained through monitoring, internal and external reviews, and feedback from stakeholders.

Institutional audit results in judgements about the institutions being reviewed.
Judgements are made about:

- the confidence that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of its programmes
- the confidence that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards.

Audit teams also comment specifically on:

- the institution's arrangements for maintaining appropriate academic standards and quality of provision of postgraduate research programmes
- the institution's approach to developing and implementing institutional strategies for enhancing the quality of its educational provision, both taught and by research

- the reliance that can reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the institution publishes about the quality of its educational provision and the standards of its awards.

If the audit includes the institution's collaborative provision the judgements and comments also apply to collaborative provision, unless the audit team considers that any of its judgements or comments in respect of the collaborative provision differ from those in respect of the institution's 'home' provision. Any such differences will be reflected in the form of words used to express a judgement or comment on the reliance that can reasonably be placed on the accuracy, integrity, completeness and frankness of the information that the institution publishes, and about the quality of its programmes and the academic standards of its awards.

Explanatory note on the format for the report and the annex

The reports of quality audits have to be useful to several audiences. The revised Institutional audit process makes a clear distinction between that part of the reporting process aimed at an external audience and that aimed at the institution. There are three elements to the reporting:

- the **summary** of the findings of the report, including the judgements, is intended for the wider public, especially potential students
- the **report** is an overview of the findings of the audit for both lay and external professional audiences
- a separate **annex** provides the detail and explanations behind the findings of the audit and is intended to be of practical use to the institution.

The report is as concise as is consistent with providing enough detail for it to make sense to an external audience as a stand-alone document. The summary, the report and the annex are published on QAA's website.

Summary

Introduction

A team of auditors from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) visited London Metropolitan University (the University) from 22-26 November 2010 to carry out an Institutional audit. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the learning opportunities available to students and on the academic standards of the institution's awards.

To arrive at its conclusions the audit team spoke to members of staff throughout the University and to current students, and read a wide range of documents about the ways in which the University manages the academic aspects of its provision.

In Institutional audit, the institution's management of both academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities are audited. The term 'academic standards' is used to describe the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an award (for example, a degree). It should be at a similar level across the United Kingdom (UK). The term 'quality of learning opportunities' is used to describe the support provided by an institution to enable students to achieve the awards. It is about the provision of appropriate teaching, support and assessment for the students.

Outcomes of the Institutional audit

As a result of its investigations the audit found that:

- **confidence** can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards
- **confidence** can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Institutional approach to quality enhancement

The University is committed to enhancing the learning opportunities of its students through a range of formal and informal processes based on a shared ethos.

Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

The supervision and support arrangements for postgraduate research students are satisfactory and meet the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*.

Published information

Reliance **can** reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the University publishes about its educational provision and the standards of its awards.

Features of good practice

The audit team identified the following areas as being good practice:

- the practical and scholarly support provided in the Assessment Framework and the taught provision manuals
- the University's systematic approach to improving taught provision through programme enhancement meetings
- the deployment of personal academic advisers and their regular use of diagnostic data to identify and support undergraduate students at academic risk
- the University's integrative approach to developing and managing collaborative provision.

Recommendations for action

The audit team considers it would be desirable for the University to:

- ensure that the terms of reference of the Research and Development Committee and the Research Degrees Committee accurately reflect their activities and relationship
- require external examiners' reports to be written in such a way as to facilitate their being shared consistently with student representatives
- maintain annual institutional oversight of developing trends in the number and nature of student appeals and cases of academic misconduct
- embed evaluation measures within enhancement plans
- strengthen internal quality reports by the inclusion of more quantitative data.

Reference points

To provide further evidence to support its findings, the audit investigated the use made by the University of the Academic Infrastructure, which provides a means of describing academic standards in UK higher education. It allows for diversity and innovation within academic programmes offered by higher education. QAA worked with the higher education sector to establish the various parts of the Academic Infrastructure, which are:

- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*)
- the frameworks for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in Scotland
- subject benchmark statements
- programme specifications.

The audit found that the University engages actively with the Academic Infrastructure.

Report

1   An Institutional audit of London Metropolitan University (the University) was undertaken in the week commencing 22 November 2010. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the University's management of the academic standards of its awards and of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

2   The audit team comprised Mrs C Blanchard, Professor R Munn, Professor I Robinson, Professor P Sullivan and Miss G Hooper, audit secretary. The audit was coordinated for QAA by Professor R Harris, Assistant Director, Reviews Group.

Section 1: Introduction and background

3   London Metropolitan University, formed in 2002 by a merger of the University of North London and London Guildhall University, has over 32,000 students, is structured around eight faculties, and undertakes the majority of teaching in two campuses three miles apart. Its mission emphasises education and research (supported increasingly by technology), employability and social responsibility.

4   The University was the subject of institutional and collaborative audits in 2005 and 2006 respectively: both expressed confidence in its management of quality and standards. The audits identified seven features of good practice and made 12 recommendations, all satisfactorily addressed. Since that time, and following a substantial clawback of funds by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) running from 2009 through to 2014, and an immediate and significant loss of annual revenue, a new Board of Governors and a new Vice-Chancellor have been installed and the University has implemented a programme designed to make substantial permanent savings in staffing and other expenditure. In reaching its conclusions, the audit team has taken full cognisance of the possible impact of these events on the management of the quality of learning opportunities and academic standards.

5   Quality and standards are managed through deliberative bodies, with executive oversight provided by an Executive Group chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and supported by advice from the influential Business Development Group. Academic Board delegates facets of its responsibility for academic matters to subordinate institutional and faculty-level bodies. At faculty-level, decisions and activities are overseen by a dedicated quality officer, located in faculty but accountable to the central Quality Enhancement Unit (a body charged, among other things, with keeping the quality framework and its delivery under review, and providing risk assessments for institutional approval activities). Departments, which exist in non-unitary faculties, have a consistent committee structure, including course committees as the primary level of student representation. The audit found the level of devolution soundly judged, facilitative of staff engagement, and involving no diminution of central oversight.

6   The audit found inconsistencies between the formal responsibilities and practical activities of the Research and Development Committee and the Research Degrees Committee. It is desirable that the University ensure that the terms of reference of the Research and Development Committee and the Research Degrees Committee accurately reflect their activities and relationship.

7   The Vice-Chancellor, who took office in January 2010, was at the time of the audit completing a major Review of Undergraduate Education, due to report in March 2011: this will include a consideration of demand, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and funding. The audit found that this Review is addressing the main challenges, financial as well as academic, facing the University.

8   Taught awards are covered by modular Undergraduate and Postgraduate Schemes: these are supported administratively by accessible offices on all campuses and designed to facilitate interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary and thematic study. The conduct of taught programmes is regulated by the Taught Provision Manual or Collaborative Taught Provision Manual, the online versions of which provide hyperlinks to other relevant documentation. The regulatory frameworks for all awards, and for professional and personal development programmes, are published in Academic Regulations; the University also publishes a comprehensive Assessment Framework. The audit identified the practical and scholarly support provided in the Assessment Framework and the taught provision manuals as a feature of good practice.

Section 2: Institutional management of academic standards

9   The University appoints external examiners in two tiers. At subject level such examiners, nominated by departments, are appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), normally for four years. They sit on subject awards boards, and are fully briefed and inducted. In addition, several senior external examiners are appointed to the University Awards Board and charged, among other things, with: confirming that awards have been conferred in accordance with Academic Regulations and good practice nationally; monitoring academic standards; and reviewing assessment policy. While the audit finds it desirable that the University require external examiners' reports to be written in such a way as to facilitate their being shared consistently with student representatives, overall the arrangements for addressing and responding to external examiners' reports are satisfactory, and external examining contributes appropriately to setting and maintaining the academic standards of awards.

10   New programmes require approval from the Business Development Group (mainly in respect of strategic and commercial matters) prior to receiving academic consideration. Advice on curriculum design and on preparing the detailed submissions required for this latter process is readily available, in particular in the Taught Provision Manual. In programme closure the interests of affected students are conscientiously addressed. Periodic review takes place on a six-yearly cycle, the process taking due account of enhancement-related issues and being aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. Annual monitoring is based on faculty annual taught provision performance statements deriving from a continuous monitoring log (a running record maintained by module and course leaders), to which a particular contribution is made by biannual departmental-level performance-enhancement meetings which follow the relevant subject standards board's deliberations on student achievement. These meetings provide a forum for departments to discuss, with external and internal examiners and the nominated quality officer, the fitness for purpose of their academic provision. The audit found evidence of the meetings being carefully followed up centrally, and of their having a positive impact on quality enhancement and the assurance of academic standards. The University's systematic approach to improving taught provision through programme enhancement meetings constitutes a feature of good practice.

11   The University completed a formal mapping exercise against the *Code of practice* in July 2010, and has procedures for identifying and notifying changes to the Academic Infrastructure generally. The readily-available and up to date Assessment Framework is aligned with the *Code of practice. Section 6: Assessment of students*, and deals, in a practical as well as descriptive way, with assessment of all types. The audit found the University alert to the necessity of engaging with all relevant external reference points. The practical and scholarly support provided in the Assessment Framework and the taught provision manuals constitutes a feature of good practice.

12   The University's assessment policies and regulations were found to be clear, comprehensive, well-understood and contributing to the maintenance of academic standards. In particular, while elsewhere (see paragraphs 28, 31 and 37) the present report identifies areas where the University could bolster its documentation by greater use of quantitative data, the audit found that the University makes several uses of such data to inform its management of academic standards. It is also improving its capabilities through better cohort analysis, although the fact that in the past there has been slippage in the production of the annual analysis of academic misconduct and appeals means that the University's capacity to identify and respond to changes in incidence and emerging trends is unavoidably restricted. In this particular case, it is desirable that the University maintain annual institutional oversight of developing trends in the number and nature of student appeals and cases of academic misconduct.

13   Overall, confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards.

Section 3: Institutional management of learning opportunities

14   The University has invested heavily in its student data system, such that personal academic advisers (see paragraph 22) are now able to monitor attendance and performance, while students are able to enrol and register online, correct personal details, access their academic records and receive assessment outcomes.

15   At institutional level, all appropriate deliberative committees have student membership; this is also so at faculty and course levels, with course committee representatives acting as a conduit for communication between staff and students and contributing constructively to quality management. Overall, and after paying careful attention to a specific reservation raised in the student written submission, the audit found the system working well.

16   All modules are subject to student comment, the results of which are formally evaluated and, once discussed and acted upon, placed on the staff intranet. The University also encourages participation in external surveys: the audit found evidence both of a comprehensive and practical response to the National Student Survey and of plans to take a more strategic response to the two national postgraduate experience surveys. Overall, the University makes constructive use of survey data and is generally effective in informing itself of, and responding to, students' views.

17   Since the last audit the University has taken steps to strengthen its research profile, including encouraging pedagogic research and, associated with this, creating a new promotion route to recognise excellence and leadership in learning and teaching. The audit found that these initiatives collectively contribute significantly to the University's learning culture. Nevertheless, the University acknowledges the need to continue to develop its research profile: it therefore commits itself (in its new Strategic Plan) to reviewing its organisation and support of research, and (in its revised Learning and Teaching Strategy) to enhancing pedagogic excellence and fostering research supporting learning and teaching. The University's taught degree provision was found to be adequately research-informed, but likely to benefit from the more systematic approach currently under development.

18   The University has no distance or online programmes. It has, however, invested heavily in its virtual learning environment; it views technology-enhanced learning as central to its longer-term pedagogy; it provides comprehensive training and support for staff and students through the Teaching and Learning Technology Centre; and it has recently taken

steps to embed learning technology in institutional culture by creating a network of 24 blended learning coordinators within faculties. These arrangements, while in some cases still work-in-progress, were found to be contributing constructively to the management of learning opportunities.

19 Placements and work-based learning are features of many taught courses: opportunities available to students include a University-wide placement learning module. The audit found that placement learning is well-managed, consistently mapped against the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning,* and contributes appropriately to student learning.

20 The student written submission made critical comments about the organisation and quality of learning resources, referring particularly to timetabling and room allocation. The audit did indeed find instances of incorrect timetabling information and the assignment of inadequate teaching rooms, but also that the University is aware of the problem and exploring possible solutions or ameliorations. Overall, the University has mechanisms to enable it to identify critical difficulties and apply remedial action, but has some way to go before it can state with confidence that its organisation of learning resources is wholly effective or that all such resources approach the quality of the best.

21 The admission process is managed centrally. The Admissions Office is authorised to make standard offers; applications from students with non-standard qualifications are considered departmentally. Following an admissions review, the University now only admits students deemed capable of completing (as opposed to benefiting from) their chosen programme: this has led to most entry requirements being raised. Induction is generally well regarded, though as part of a broader review of the international student experience the University is giving consideration to its sufficiency for such students.

22 The local offices of the two modular schemes are the locus of student administrative support. Regulatory and other information of direct relevance to students is readily accessible on the intranet; programme specifications appear in course handbooks; module handbooks make assessment criteria clear and unambiguous. The audit found the handbooks consistent, helpful and sufficient for purpose. For undergraduates, academic guidance is provided by a personal academic adviser with extensive responsibilities for all, but especially first-year, students, while giving particular attention to students at risk of failure or withdrawal. Advisers receive regular and comprehensive data to facilitate attendance, engagement and achievement tracking, and examples were found of such data being used constructively and proactively. The deployment of personal academic advisers and their regular use of diagnostic data to identify and support undergraduate students at academic risk constitute a feature of good practice.

23 In addition to a study skills module, compulsory under the Undergraduate Scheme, students experiencing academic difficulties currently (though this provision is under review) have access to wide-ranging support from several units and departments within the University. The services provided by the Department of Student Services in particular, which have been mapped against the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students* and *Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance*, attract positive student comment. The support provided for students throughout their membership of the University plays a central role in maintaining the quality of learning opportunities.

24 The University's commitment to staff development, identified in both previous audits as a feature of good practice, is well established. Developmental opportunities are available from a number of sources and take a number of forms: the Staff Development Unit produces a comprehensive annual review, and new staff members are both assigned a mentor with clearly specified responsibilities and required to undertake an induction programme.

Staff members new to teaching, including hourly-paid teaching staff and research students with teaching responsibilities, are required to take a Higher Education Academy-accredited programme, or modules thereof commensurate with their duties. While it was noted that students made some critical comments about the language skills of some lecturing staff, the University stated that it was aware of the situation and addressing it. The University should in future be alert, when making appointments, to the importance of all lecturing staff having appropriate language skills.

25   Overall, confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of students' learning opportunities.

Section 4: Institutional approach to quality enhancement

26   In creating the Quality Enhancement Unit in 2009 the University took a major step towards rationalising procedures and harmonising practice. Not the least important facet of the Unit's contribution has been the work of faculty-based quality officers, introduced to support consistency of practice and to draw attention to areas where improved performance was required. At institutional level, the University undertakes a number of enhancement-focused activities, while at an individual level good practice by members of staff is recognised through promotion, the conferment of professorial title, teaching fellowships and appraisal-related financial reward.

27   Acknowledging both that its approach to enhancement would benefit from further coherence and systematisation, and that it needs to develop a more accurate and reliable means of capturing student numbers and profiles, the University's newly-introduced Quality Enhancement Strategy involves embedding a culture of learning both within and across faculties. In conjunction with the revised Learning and Teaching Strategy it aims to: transform students into learning partners; increase the creative and innovative aspects of the curriculum (with particular reference to e-learning and employability); give students maximum opportunity to study at a place and time of their own choosing; and develop e-learning as a key element of quality enhancement.

28   The University can now be said to be taking wide-ranging and deliberate steps at institutional level to enhance quality. The Quality Enhancement and Learning and Teaching Strategies are consonant: both are embedded in business planning and quality processes and both put the student at the heart of the educational mission. Nevertheless, the former Strategy remains embryonic and its quantitative base is insufficient to permit its effectiveness to be reliably measured or to ensure that areas of weakness are identified and eliminated. It is desirable that the University embed evaluation measures within its enhancement plans. Overall, however, the University is committed to enhancing the learning opportunities of its students through a range of formal and informal processes based on a shared ethos.

Section 5: Collaborative arrangements

29   The University, which collaborates with 35 partners at home and abroad in the delivery of some 140 programmes up to and including master's level, describes its main strategic purposes as: institutional reputation-building; creating pathways for students to continue their studies in London; promoting engagement with employers; generating income; and contributing to the diversity of the student population. It normally aligns quality management with on-campus arrangements; additional considerations when they come into play (for example, due diligence and contractual issues) are comprehensively addressed at approval.

30   The University is properly sensitive to the need to ensure the equity of assessment content and the security of assessment arrangements. Hence samples of student work are second marked by University staff, external examiners are University appointees and trained accordingly, and assessment boards are chaired by University staff. The audit found that the assessment of collaborative provision students is both fair and secure.

31   To ensure that quality management procedures are scrupulously followed, each partner organisation is issued with the Collaborative Taught Provision Manual and assigned both an officer from the Quality Enhancement Unit and an academic liaison tutor from the faculty or department concerned. Monitoring and support are effected by visits and email contact, and partner organisations' annual monitoring reports and, increasingly, programme and module logs. While annual monitoring reports are generally well-structured and self-evaluative, their breadth of scope, discursive nature and limited use of trends and comparisons restrict the utility of their contribution to managing and enhancing the collaborative portfolio. It is desirable that the University strengthen internal quality reports by the inclusion of more quantitative data (see also paragraphs 28 and 37).

32   The audit monitored the University's approach to ensuring the effectiveness of quality management in collaborative provision. For learning resources a statement of provision is included in approval and re-approval documentation, and is regularly monitored; for staff development the University offers realistic and well-targeted opportunities to partner organisation staff; in respect of external reference points it requires full engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and other such points; performance enhancement meetings, already identified as a feature of good practice in on-campus provision (see paragraph 10), are increasingly an effective vehicle for module review and addressing student feedback; procedures for student representation and student feedback largely mirror on-campus arrangements; the approach taken to monitoring the development, production, quality, accuracy and currency of published information is effective and integrated. The audit found that this consonance of procedures significantly eases the transition to campus of students from collaborative organisations.

33   Overall, the audit found the University's management of collaborative provision effective; collaborative provision is very well-articulated, managed and practised, and the system is aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. The University's integrative approach to developing and managing collaborative provision is a feature of good practice.

Section 6: Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

34   Until 2009 the management of research degree programmes was dispersed, with seven research student progress groups operating outside the then departmental system responsible for research students. Such groups are now located within faculties and supported by a Research & Graduate School. These changes have contributed to a strengthening of the institutional research culture and therefore to an improvement in the intellectual environment for the University's 450 research students (constituting around two per cent of the student population). In the audit such students described their physical environment as very variable across the University, but more often than not conducive to study.

35   The clear and accurate Research & Graduate School website provides comprehensive guidance for potential students; admission and induction arrangements are generally efficient and satisfactory; a range of commercial software tools designed to help research students develop their professional skills is available to them; many well-publicised

developmental opportunities are on offer; and scholarships and teaching opportunities (with mandatory training) are available on a competitive basis.

36   Supervision is undertaken by teams of two or three: the respective roles of supervisory team members are clearly articulated in a well-regarded Code of Practice. Supervision sessions (the key points arising from which are recorded by students) are supplemented by email and telephone contacts as necessary, an arrangement seen as particularly helpful by part-time students. Students' positive view of supervisory arrangements (which extends to the administrative support provided by the Graduate School Research Office) is consistent with the results of external and internal survey data and confirmed by the audit.

37   A range of formal and informal methods is deployed to receive, consider and respond to research student feedback: all these are clearly explained in readily-available documentation, and were found to be effective. The main channels for collating, evaluating and responding to internal and external feedback are module and course logs, research student progress groups, Research Degrees Committee, and, ultimately, Academic Board. The audit, while confirming the general effectiveness of these arrangements, found again that they would be strengthened were greater consideration given to quantitative data on the nature of the feedback received and the strength and frequency with which it was made.

38   In summary, while the Research & Graduate School faces challenges in what may be difficult years ahead, the audit found that the University has increasingly strong and generally sound systems and procedures to develop the research and other skills of postgraduate research students. The University has put in place effective procedures for the management of its research programmes, which meet the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes*.

Section 7: Published information

39   Published information relevant to this audit is of three main kinds: regulatory or similar material relating to quality and standards; institutional profiling; and student achievement and other quantitative data. The University, which acknowledges that it does not have a consolidated information management strategy, is currently undertaking an institution-wide project to collate these disparate sources of information, set out a formal process of information management, and ensure that all published information is definitive and current.

40   The Director of Marketing and Communications has overall responsibility for the content and style of the website; the Planning Office is responsible for producing data for returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency; Information Systems and Services provides technical support. Each faculty and professional service department has a nominated content provider charged with ensuring that web-related responsibilities are properly discharged. Students, while drawing attention to specific omissions (the cause of which was found on investigation to lie outside the University's control), appear generally satisfied with the accuracy and completeness of published information.

41   The University's central document management system serves as the repository of definitive programme and module specifications; extracts from module specifications are placed on the website to provide outline information for students, potential applicants and others; programme specifications appear consistently in course handbooks: like other information they are constructed on standard templates and double-checked by the Academic Registry.

42   It is confirmed that the externally available information required by HEFCE guidelines is published on the University's website, and that the teaching quality information on the Unistats website appears accurate and complete.

43   Overall the audit found that reliance can reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the University publishes about its educational provision and the standards of its awards.

Section 8: Recommendations and features of good practice

Features of good practice

44   The audit identified the following areas as being good practice:

- the practical and scholarly support provided in the Assessment Framework and the taught provision manuals (paragraphs 8 and 11)
- the University's systematic approach to improving taught provision through programme enhancement meetings (paragraph 10)
- the deployment of personal academic advisers and their regular use of diagnostic data to identify and support undergraduate students at academic risk (paragraph 22)
- the University's integrative approach to developing and managing collaborative provision (paragraph 33).

Recommendations for action

45   It would be desirable for the University to:

- ensure that the terms of reference of the Research and Development Committee and the Research Degrees Committee accurately reflect their activities and relationship (paragraph 6)
- require external examiners' reports to be written in such a way as to facilitate their being shared consistently with student representatives (paragraph 9)
- maintain annual institutional oversight of developing trends in the number and nature of student appeals and cases of academic misconduct (paragraph 12)
- embed evaluation measures within enhancement plans (paragraph 28)
- strengthen internal quality reports by the inclusion of more quantitative data (paragraph 31).

Appendix

London Metropolitan University's response to the Institutional audit report

The University welcomes the audit team's judgements of 'confidence' in the soundness of the academic standards of our awards and the quality of learning opportunities made available to students. We are also very pleased to note that a number of areas have been recognised as constituting good practice particularly our Assessment Framework, our innovative Performance Enhancement Meetings, our integrative approach to managing collaborative provision and our approach to student support through Personal Academic Advisors.

We found the recommendations for action to be reasonable and helpful and have already begun to discuss these and other comment within the report. In particular, we appreciate the endorsement of our new enhancement strategy and the advice on how it can be strengthened.

The University would like to take this opportunity to thank the audit team for the professional and positive approach to the process and for the constructive nature of the report which we feel will help us work together to enhance the quality of the student experience.