London School of Law

Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

February 2012

Key findings about London School of Law

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in February 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives, the Institute of Legal Executives and the University of London.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of the awarding body and organisations.

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- close and regular engagement between the School's managers and teaching staff enables collective and consistent assurance of the quality of the provision (paragraph 1.4)
- staff are accessible and provide high levels of individual support for students (paragraph 2.9)
- well designed templates for induction and tutorials ensure consistent and effective monitoring of student support (paragraph 2.10).

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- identify a formal mechanism to oversee the quality and standards of the programmes (paragraph 1.5)
- engage more formally and explicitly with appropriate external reference points to take fully into account recognised effective practice in the management of academic standards and quality (paragraph 1.7)
- ensure that the annual monitoring process systematically reviews all higher education programmes and takes due account of relevant external evidence (paragraph 1.11)
- adopt a more strategic and equitable approach to the management and development of the School's learning resources (paragraph 2.15)
- develop and monitor the virtual learning environment to ensure that all information is accurate and complete (paragraph 3.6).

The team also considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- further develop the implementation of the School's Quality Strategy (paragraph 1.3)
- provide further training for teaching staff in the use of external reference points

(paragraphs 1.8, 2.4)
- formalise programme team meetings to include discussion of learning opportunities and to identify and disseminate good practice (paragraph 2.2)
- consider improving the learner feedback questionnaire to make it more effective in annual monitoring (paragraph 2.7)
- improve written feedback provided for students so that it is clear and consistent (paragraph 2.11)
- develop an approach to staff development that promotes the link between teaching observation and staff appraisal (paragraph 2.13)
- improve the quality of information for prospective students and other stakeholders (paragraph 3.1)
- consistently implement proofreading and version control in accordance with the School's procedure for monitoring and review of public information (paragraph 3.4)
- provide programme level information for students that contextualises the information provided by the awarding body and organisations (paragraph 3.5).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London School of Law (the provider; the School). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives (ABE), the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) and the University of London. The review was carried out by Mrs Ana Almeida, Mr Bob Millington and Dr Colin Fryer (reviewers) and Dr Margaret Johnson (coordinator). Professor Nicholas Goddard was present to observe the review as a trainee coordinator.

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [*Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook*](#).[2] Evidence in support of the review included a range of documentation supplied by the provider and the awarding body and organisations, the BAC Institutional report, and meetings with staff, the awarding body and organisations' representatives and students.

The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- the regulations of its awarding body and organisations.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

The London School of Law (the School) is a small, family-run private provider established in 1991 and based in the heart of London. There are currently 180 full-time students enrolled, of whom 3 per cent are EU students studying part-time and 97 per cent are international students studying full-time. All students are based at the main campus and many have transferred their studies from other private providers in the UK. There are four full-time and seven part-time teaching staff, a newly appointed information technology support officer and three administrative staff.

The School is an accredited centre for ABE, ILEX and the University of London LLB (Bachelor of Laws) courses. It offers a range of courses from level 3 to level 6. The School's mission is to offer a manageable and friendly learning environment with a professional approach to teaching and learning, and to ensure that students make the most of their future careers.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body and organisations:

University of London
- Bachelor of Laws

Association of Business Executives
- Higher Diploma in Business Management
- Higher Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

- Graduate Diploma in Business Management
- Graduate Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality

Institute of Legal Executives
- Level 6 Higher Professional Diploma in Law

The provider's stated responsibilities

The School's academic provision is offered under partnership arrangements with one awarding body and two awarding organisations, which are responsible for ensuring that their processes and procedures take into account the Academic Infrastructure and the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). The School has limited responsibility for academic standards, with primary responsibility being retained by the awarding body and organisations each of whom has delegated responsibility to the School for the quality of the higher education it provides.

Recent developments

The School is currently working towards upgrading its centre status with the University of London and is working closely with the awarding body to ensure that the criteria for a successful outcome are both fully understood and achievable. A virtual learning environment has recently been developed and is in the pilot stage. The School has appointed an Information Technology Technician to further develop and maintain the site that will support both administrative and academic procedures. There are plans to provide a Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care accredited by the Association of Business Practitioners, which will begin in September 2012.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A specific student submission was not prepared but the students provided feedback that was used by the School to write the self-evaluation, enabling the identification of strengths and areas for improvement. The students met with the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the review team during the visit. Students made a useful contribution to the meeting, were very positive about their experience at the School and, in particular, highlighted the easily accessible and generous support provided to them by staff.

Detailed findings about London School of Law

1   Academic standards

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1   Leadership is good and management is effective. Management is designed to support all aspects of the provision and reflects strongly the requirements of the awarding body and organisations to ensure the maintenance of academic standards. The School diligently adheres to the requirements of the awarding body and organisations' accreditation handbooks, particularly to the roles and delegated responsibilities for managing academic standards. These are appropriately understood and correctly interpreted by the School. The School is currently working closely with the University of London to upgrade its centre status, and to ensure that the criteria for a successful outcome are both fully understood and achievable.

1.2   The School is highly committed to the development of higher education and takes pride in its provision. Overall responsibility for the monitoring and review of academic standards resides with the School's management team. The Principal is responsible for overall strategic development and the maintenance of quality and standards; the Centre Manager is responsible for managing physical resources and staff development; and the Heads of Business and Law each have local quality assurance and day-to-day management responsibilities. The subject heads report upwards to the Centre Manager who maintains relationships with the awarding body and organisations.

1.3   The staffing structure is appropriate for the current student numbers and range of academic provision, but would be enhanced if the role of the Quality Assurance Coordinator was developed further. Management and academic functions are effectively linked through the management team's contribution to programme delivery. Senior managers are strongly committed to raising standards and work closely with awarding partners to enhance provision. The Quality Assurance Coordinator oversees the development of the School policies and procedures to support the maintenance of academic standards. This role is pivotal in the School's transformational process of fully engaging with the Academic Infrastructure and embedding an integrated approach to quality assurance.

1.4   Regular contact between the School's management team and teaching staff enables effective collective management and assurance of academic standards. There is consistency of practice by teaching staff to address actions and acknowledge the needs of students. The programme team meeting and the subsequent follow-up meetings between the heads of subject and the Centre Manager are important forums to share ideas and address emerging issues. For example, the team is vigilant in addressing student attendance at external examinations.

1.5   The School needs to review its deliberative structures to strengthen the quality of the reporting functions. Responsibility for the oversight of academic standards, and quality reporting, resides with the Quality Team that consists of the School's managers and the Quality Assurance Coordinator. However, the terms of reference and lines of reporting of the Quality Team are not clear. The central oversight of the Academic Infrastructure and its impact on policies and procedures and the monitoring of the awarding body and organisations' accreditation requirements are not explicitly stated. The establishment of a formal group would strengthen the School's deliberative structures and enhance its oversight of the maintenance of academic standards.

1.6   Teaching staff have a wide range of experience in the state and private sector and their qualifications are appropriate to deliver the courses of study. Most teaching staff hold the minimum of a master's degree.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.7   The School should engage more formally and explicitly with all relevant external reference points, particularly the Academic Infrastructure. The School defers to the awarding body and organisations' requirements and has taken only limited account of the Academic Infrastructure. This is acknowledged in the self-evaluation and an initial engagement with the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice)* is currently addressed in the School's Quality Manual. The School's management processes have yet to be explicitly evaluated and mapped against the relevant sections of the *Code of practice* to demonstrate where the School and awarding partners' responsibilities are met.

1.8   The School's staff development strategy needs to raise awareness among teaching staff of the importance of the Academic Infrastructure in the delivery of higher education. The School has made good progress in developing its quality assurance processes, but staff development activities did not include appropriate training on the Academic Infrastructure. The School should ensure that training is provided for staff so that the value and relevance of the Academic Infrastructure becomes embedded in the work of delivery teams, and teachers are fully conversant with its components.

How does the provider use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?

1.9   Academic standards are assured, as detailed in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4. The accreditation process for each awarding body or organisation is comprehensive and rigorous, and provides reassurance that the School has been judged as meeting the standards expected by respective partners. A condition for accreditation is that the School has robust procedures and control mechanisms for those aspects of quality and standards for which it is responsible. For example, the School must undertake annual review and student feedback surveys. The approval and accreditation processes enable the respective awarding body or organisation, in partnership with the School, to develop, maintain and improve the quality and delivery of the relevant qualifications.

1.10   Assessment processes are robust and provide assurance that academic standards are maintained. Teaching staff at the School play no part in designing summative assignment briefs or examination questions, and have no involvement in marking or moderating student work. The awarding body and organisations are solely responsible for the setting, marking and monitoring of summative assessment practices and the appointment of examiners. This gives confidence in the School's management of academic standards.

1.11   The School recently established an annual monitoring process that clearly contributes to improvement, but requires further development so that it is located within an integrated quality assurance framework. A programme report is produced that uses a range of data, including success rates, feedback from the School's questionnaires and student feedback. The School is in the process of embedding its annual monitoring procedures but as yet the review process does not cover all the higher education provision. The evaluation of academic standards makes insufficient use of a wide range of evidence, such as chief examiners' reports from the awarding body and organisations, sector benchmarking of achievement and student performance in individual modules. Teaching staff at all levels

need to contribute to the process of review with action plans formally monitored at programme and quality team meetings.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body and organisations.

2   Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1   The management of the quality of learning opportunities is effective and arrangements and responsibilities are as described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6. Each subject area has a designated Head whose responsibilities follow clear procedures set out in the School's Quality Manual. Much of the day-to-day management of teaching and learning is put into effect through informal and ongoing discussions between teaching staff. For example, detailed schemes of work are developed by teaching staff to ensure that the programme specifications of the awarding body and organisations are fully implemented. Where appropriate, formal procedures are in place and schemes of work are approved and signed off before they are forwarded to the Centre Manager to keep on file.

2.2   Programme team meetings are not yet fully embedded and will benefit from a more formal structure. Arrangements are in place to hold meetings each term, with all team members present, to discuss key performance indicators such as learning opportunities, student achievement data and student satisfaction feedback. Staff provided examples of the way meetings are used to advance programme business. However, there is scope to introduce fixed agenda items to ensure adequate coverage of the full range of learning opportunities such as the recognition and dissemination of good practice.

2.3   The School has recently introduced an annual monitoring process that strengthens the opportunity to evaluate and enhance the quality of learning opportunities. The process operates at programme level and includes the analysis of performance data and identifies areas for action that are carried forward into a quality improvement plan.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.4   The School acknowledges that it has not yet fully engaged with the Academic Infrastructure, as outlined in paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8. Steps now need to be taken to ensure that the precepts of the *Code of practice* that have a bearing on the quality assurance of learning opportunities at the School are fully embedded, and that their significance as reference points is understood by staff.

How does the provider assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.5   Programme delivery is supported by a well considered teaching and learning strategy closely directed at the needs of overseas students. Emphasis is placed on student-centred learning that accommodates different learning styles and cultural needs, and requires students to demonstrate their learning as an integral part of each session. Robust policies are in place to monitor attendance and appropriate behaviour. These are included in the student handbook and discussed during course induction. They help support the development of a professional ethos in learning and maintain the School's strong

commitment to equal opportunities in a culturally diverse community. Students confirmed their full support of the policies and understood why they had been put in place. They also provided many useful examples of their engagement in student-centred learning and demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching they received.

2.6   A robust teacher observation policy has recently been implemented to stimulate the quality improvement of teaching and learning. All staff are observed and graded at least annually by a senior manager. The session provides an important opportunity for enhancement through written teacher feedback and the identification of areas for improvement that are developed in an action plan. The first set of observations was recently completed with generally favourable outcomes by the observers and the observed. The School has recognised an opportunity to develop skills in the implementation of the scheme and is currently arranging a training event to be delivered by an outside speaker.

2.7   The School makes good use of student feedback to enhance the provision. However, it could be made more effective with improvements to the design and administration of its learner feedback questionnaire. To improve the monitoring of students' examination preparation, the School should consider including questions about satisfaction with tutor feedback on coursework and mock examinations. At both programme and School level, the School could also evaluate satisfaction rates, provide comparative data, and improve the effectiveness of the questionnaire in the self-evaluation cycle.

2.8   An effective staffing policy is in place, which ensures that well qualified individuals are recruited with substantial and current vocational experience in their subject. A teaching qualification is not mandatory but any individual without it is supported by a mentor, in peer observation and through staff development. The procedure is working smoothly and a number of staff will enrol on a teaching course relevant to their tertiary role.

How does the provider assure itself that students are supported effectively?

2.9   Student support arrangements are comprehensive and easily accessed. Students receive a high level of individual support with regular tutorials to discuss individual learning plans and programme options, and to identify any additional needs. An open-door policy that uses direct contact, telephone, email and the internet is in place to ensure everyone receives the support they need at all times. A wide range of pastoral, financial and welfare services is accessed through the centre manager, and includes a number of services to target specifically the needs of overseas students. These include specialist legal advice to assist with student visa procurement and renewal.

2.10   An individual student's progress on their course is carefully monitored and recorded. An excellent feature of the provision is the implementation of well designed pro formas to underpin support and enable tracking. These are valued by students and teaching staff. Good examples of the forms are the induction checklist and the Individual Learning Plan and its review, which are used to structure discussions and which facilitate easy monitoring of student progress.

2.11   There is room for improvement in the provision of written feedback to students on their formative assignments and mock examinations. Most staff provide extensive oral feedback and make reference to the annotations and notes they have made on scripts. The procedure is greatly appreciated by students. However, the feedback process overall would be strengthened if the advice was summarised in a customised feedback sheet. This would secure greater consistency and permit the sharing of good practice in this important aspect of the provision.

What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.12   The School's staff development policy provides a useful framework to ensure that the career development needs of individuals and the operational needs of the organisation are met. Staff maintain a professional development record and there are opportunities to discuss this regularly with the School's Principal. The main aim of the policy is to address the essential staff development required to maintain and enhance programme quality and the development of new initiatives. The School provided good examples of the way this is put into practice through its staff induction programme and the way inexperienced members of staff are mentored in their role and encouraged to enrol on suitable teaching qualification courses.

2.13   The School needs to develop an integrated framework for staff development that links teaching observation and staff appraisal. This framework should be included in the staff handbook. Staff development records clearly demonstrate that the majority of staff maintain their vocational currency. However, the School needs to monitor these records to ensure sufficient activities are specifically directed towards improving the quality of learning opportunities. The School should develop its in-house staff development programme appropriately and ensure that all staff are provided with the opportunity to discuss and disseminate good practice.

How effectively does the provider ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

2.14   Essential learning materials are supplied by the awarding body and organisations in both paper and electronic format and, where necessary, these are further supplemented by the School's staff. In response to students' concerns, the School has developed an action plan to improve the range of print resources available in the library, to significantly upgrade information technology facilities and to improve access to the internet. An Information Technology Technician is now in post to support students and to make progress in the development of the School's virtual learning environment. This was available for viewing in pilot form and when launched has the potential to enhance the range of resources that students can access. Students confirmed their overall general satisfaction with the available resources and felt that any concerns they had were addressed.

2.15   The School needs to develop a clear and coherent resources strategy. The current resources policy statement offers no explanation of how services will be implemented and prioritised within a phased budget and allocation cycle. Nor does it address the development of the School's virtual learning environment. A more coherent strategy will help the School to plan and extend the range of materials that it can make available electronically to support students' learning. In addition, the new e-learning policy needs to be reviewed before this important initiative is made available to students.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

3   Public information

How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?

3.1   The School effectively communicates public information to students through its accurate and clear website, student handbook and prospectus. The scope and depth of information provided on the School's website could be improved to enhance its impact on prospective students and other stakeholders. Students would find it useful to see the relevant policies relating to their experience at the School and their residence in the UK.

3.2   Students have access to, and use, the University of London's virtual learning environment, the Association of Business Executives' member's area and the Institute of Legal Executives' website. The School is not responsible for these electronic platforms. Course specifications are provided by each awarding body and organisation in accordance with the relevant agreements. The School is required to seek approval for its marketing materials from its accrediting body and organisations.

3.3   The School should establish a protocol for the threshold of public information provided across its provision. Currently, the sources of information for which the School is responsible are adequate in that students identify word-of-mouth, highly trusted sponsor status and visits to the School as the main decisive factors in their choice of institution.

How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.4   There is an effective procedure for the revising, approving and publishing of information which is, collectively, the responsibility of the Principal, Centre Manager and Head of Administration. There is scope for improving proofreading and version control to ensure full alignment with the procedure.

3.5   The School diligently uses the programme specifications provided by the awarding body and organisations in line with the agreements between the institutions. However, the length and detail in the specifications is not an effective or manageable tool for tutors and students. The School should consider the development of specific programme handbooks that contextualise the information provided by the awarding partners and ensure that all elements of the Academic Infrastructure and relevant sections of the C*ode of practice* are embedded. This reinforces the School's ownership of the provision and complements the awarding body and organisations' responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities.

3.6   The School's management team should reflect on the implications and challenges of developing its virtual learning environment. This is being piloted and has the potential to support both administrative and academic procedures. It will enable the School to fully comply with the UK Border Agency requirements and to actively engage with the Academic Infrastructure. Currently, the platform is solely managed by a full-time Information Technology Technician, which leaves the academic scope of the e-learning environment unmanaged. Teaching staff should participate in the future development and monitoring of the virtual learning environment to ensure threshold standards of public information are being met. An e-learning policy is under development to manage the content and the use of the electronic platform, but the impact of the Academic Infrastructure on its development has not been considered.

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Action plan[3]

The London School of Law action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight February 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• close and regular engagement between the School's managers and teaching staff enables collective and consistent assurance of the quality of the provision (paragraph 1.4)	Continue the close and regular meetings with the introduction of a termly and annual agenda to formalise the meetings and ensure the regularity is maintained throughout the academic year Meetings policy to be introduced as part of the School's policies and implemented across all departments	June 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator and Centre Manager	Term and annual meetings held and formally minuted	Principal	Comprehensive programme reports to form part of the self-evaluation

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[3] The provider has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the provider's awarding body and organisations.

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• staff are accessible and provide high levels of individual support for students (paragraph 2.9)	Continue offering the current level of support to all existing and new students	Ongoing	Centre Manager and all teaching staff	Students to complete feedback forms every term to ensure that the level of support being offered is appropriate	Quality Assurance Coordinator and Principal	Evaluation of student feedback on the level of support being offered
• well designed templates for induction and tutorials ensure consistent and effective monitoring of student support (paragraph 2.10).	Continue using the Individual Learning Plans, reviews and induction checklists as part of student tracking	Ongoing	Centre Manager and all teaching staff	Student feedback pertaining to the tracking mechanisms in place	Principal	Evaluate and monitor student progress through Individual Learning Plans, feedback and review
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• identify a formal mechanism to oversee the quality and standards of the programmes (paragraph 1.5)	A formal group to be established consisting of a Quality Assurance Coordinator and three members of the team who oversee and manage the quality and standards of the programmes Clearly define the lines of reporting of	June 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator, Principal, Centre Manager, heads of departments	Hold quality meetings at least twice a term Clearer lines of reporting pertaining to the quality and management of the programmes	Heads of departments	Quality improvement plan as part of the self-assessment process

	the quality team in an updated organisation chart					
• engage more formally and explicitly with appropriate external reference points to take fully into account recognised effective practice in the management of academic standards and quality (paragraph 1.7)	Create a mapping document to link the School's policies and practices to the Academic Infrastructure Also create a training guide related to the Academic Infrastructure and the *Code of practice* for all members of the team The School policy needs to incorporate the awarding body's and organisations' access arrangements and create one policy statement	July 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator and Centre Manager	Mapping document Single consistent policies pertaining to access arrangements	Principal	All members of team to have an awareness of the *Code of practice* and the Academic Infrastructure
• ensure that the annual monitoring process systematically reviews all higher education programmes and	Create a policy on the frequency and means for tutors to provide feedback to learners, either formally or informally, including assignments and	July 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator, Centre Manager, awarding bodies, heads of departments and	Updated policy Closer engagement with awarding bodies and organisations	Principal	Use of a wider range of evidence Successful embedding of the annual monitoring procedures as

| takes due account of relevant external evidence (paragraph 1.11) | mock examinations

The procedure will be consistent, valid and reliable and will review the current documentation

The feedback will be evaluated and analysed and appropriate remedial action will be provided on areas for improvement

Tutors to use chief examiners' reports to assess areas of weakness and provide appropriate level of support

Centre Manager to contact awarding bodies and organisations to ascertain how both can work together to evaluate and compare the provision with similar colleges in the sector | | tutors | Improved examination results | | part of the self-assessment process

Comparison of data annually, monitoring areas of strength and improving areas of weaknesses |

• adopt a more strategic and equitable approach to the management and development of the School's learning resources (paragraph 2.15)	Create a resources policy and an annual resourcing budget with the various course departments	September 2012	Centre Manager, heads of departments with the input of tutors	Successful management of a resourcing budget	Principal	All departments have sufficient resources in order to meet the requirements of the course
• develop and monitor the virtual learning environment to ensure that all information is accurate and complete (paragraph 3.6).	An e-learning strategy will be created to fit with the virtual learning environment system that the School plans to introduce An e-learning policy will be also written in order to support the strategy and ensure that all students and members of the team have a clear understanding of the same	August 2012	Centre staff, Information and Computer Technology Manager and heads of departments	Successful engagement of learners and staff to use the virtual learning environment system	Principal	Feedback from users of the virtual learning environment and monitoring of the numbers of users
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• further develop the implementation of the School's	Ensure that the Quality Assurance Coordinator role is	July 2012	Centre Manager	Improvement in the quality of provision and	Principal	Integrated approach to managing the

Quality Strategy (paragraph 1.3)	made a permanent position as part of the School's staffing structure			assurance that the quality strategy is implemented as part of the School's growth		quality assurance of the School's provision Use of statistical data as part of self-assessment to clearly show areas of improvement
• provide further training for teaching staff in the use of external reference points (paragraphs 1.8, 2.4)	Members of staff to enrol on appropriate teaching qualifications Members of staff to update with formal and informal training that contributes to their continuing professional development	September 2012	Centre Manager All teaching staff	Tutors having a relevant teaching qualification and ensure that appropriate training is provided that contributes to their teaching roles	Quality Assurance Coordinator and Principal	Ensure all relevant staff members have a minimum of a Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector level 4 by September 2013 Ensure all new staff that join the team have a minimum teaching qualification in addition to relevant teaching experience
• formalise programme team meetings to include discussion of learning opportunities and to identify and	Produce a standard agenda for programme team meetings Hold team meetings each term to discuss	July 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator, Centre Manager and teaching staff	Minutes for the programme meetings to be documented	Principal and Quality Assurance Coordinator	Comprehensive programme reports for each department to form part of the self-evaluation process

disseminate good practice (paragraph 2.2)	learning opportunities, student progress, student achievement data, student feedback and any programme changes					
• consider improving the learner feedback questionnaire to make it more effective in annual monitoring (paragraph 2.7)	The feedback forms need to be completed by each programme area and incorporate questions on student opinion of the usefulness of assignments as part of the programme	April 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Implementation of revised feedback forms Monitor the feedback received to maintain the areas of strength and improve the areas of weakness	Principal and Centre Manager	Use feedback information for statistical analysis and compare figures on an annual basis Incorporate the information as part of the self-assessment report
• improve written feedback provided for students so that it is clear and consistent (paragraph 2.11)	Create a feedback sheet that is customised to support the oral feedback provided to students from tutors Support all tutors in using the feedback form to support the oral feedback being currently provided to the learners Create a policy on the frequency and means	April 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Create a new feedback form Ensure all members of the teaching team use the forms appropriately and provide feedback that is supportive The School will also consider a 360 degree feedback process whereby learners	Principal and Centre Manager	Evaluation and analysis of feedback with appropriate remedial action provided on areas for improvement

	for tutors to provide feedback to learners, either formally or informally, and including assignments and mock examinations, which is consistent, valid and reliable			are able to use a section in the form to provide feedback on tutors		
• develop an approach to staff development that promotes the link between teaching observation and staff appraisal (paragraph 2.13)	Observation forms to be revised and implemented Heads of departments to be provided with appropriate training in relation to grading descriptors and the new format of forms to be used The observations to be used as part of the staff appraisal process Staff handbook will need to be reviewed on an annual basis and any changes will need to be incorporated	June 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator, heads of departments and teaching staff	Staff continuing professional development will be incorporated into all areas Staff handbook to be updated Ensure observations form part of the staff appraisal system	Centre Manager and Principal	Will form part of the self-assessment process and will ensure that the quality of teaching is maintained across the School's provision

	In-house training needs to be offered in areas such as peer observations, changes in programme areas, any policy and legislative changes and updates					
• improve the quality of information for prospective students and other stakeholders (paragraph 3.1)	Review student handbook Improve the School's website and prospectus by incorporating further information pertaining to the policies, programme updates and the School's relationship with the relevant awarding body or organisation	Ongoing	Centre Manager, Senior Administrator and Information and Computing Technology Manager	Updated website, brochures and handbooks	Principal	Receive feedback from stakeholders pertaining to clarity and understanding of public information
• consistently implement proofreading and version control in accordance with the School's procedure for monitoring and review of public information	Ensure all School's documents are proofread and that updated versions and dates are included as part of the document headers or footers	June 2012	Centre Manager and Administration department	All documents have relevant dates and version control All documents are proofread	Principal	At the beginning of every term the School will check that all documents are up to date and that all information pertaining to the programmes is proofread and

(paragraph 3.4)						signed off before publication
• provide programme level information for students that contextualises the information provided by the awarding body and organisations (paragraph 3.5).	Review and redesign programme handbooks ensuring that all information pertaining to the specific programme is included Ensure relevant elements of the *Code of practice* are embedded in the handbooks for both students and tutors	September 2012	Quality Assurance Coordinator, heads of departments, awarding bodies and organisations, and tutors	Updated handbooks with clear guidelines pertaining to course specifications linking it to the *Code of practice*	Centre Manager and Principal	Feedback from tutors and students on the usefulness of the handbooks as part of their learning journey collected and evaluated in December 2012 Based on evaluation of the data changes will be incorporated as part of the ongoing quality improvement

About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the
Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook[4]

Academic Infrastructure Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education
community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses
meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a
suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference
points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark
statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway
(2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher
Education.

academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions
manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and
expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

awarding body A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the
framework for higher education qualifications, such as diplomas or degrees.

awarding organisation An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications
located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these
qualifications are at levels one to eight, with levels four and above being classed as 'higher
education').

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards
in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for
higher education institutions.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular
function.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements
respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

enhancement Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning
opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution
manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

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:

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.*

highly trusted sponsor An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

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

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

programme (of study) An approved course of study which 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.

provider An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

quality See **academic quality**.

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.

threshold academic standard The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

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

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk