Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of London School of Science and Technology

January 2019

Contents

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 the London School of Science and Technology. The review took place from 14 to 17 January 2019 and was conducted by a team of four reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Steve Evans
- Mr Peter Hymans
- Mrs Polly Skinner
- Mr Abraham Baldry (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[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 (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

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

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

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review.

Key findings

Judgements

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities is **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Recommendations

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

By July 2019:

- ensure that reporting lines between committees are clear and well defined within the terms of reference of the governance structure to secure oversight of academic standards and quality (Expectation A2.1)
- ensure that policies and procedures relating to the approval of new programmes are clear and consistent (Expectation B1)
- establish clear criteria for the recommendation of new courses and developments by the committees involved in the approval process (Expectation B1)
- strengthen the arrangements for ensuring the health and safety aspects of student work placements (Expectation B10).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students:

- the steps the School is taking to fully engage students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience (Expectation B5)
- the actions being taken to ensure that all policies and procedures are accurate and trustworthy (Information)
- the steps being taken to develop a more strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities (Enhancement)
- the work being undertaken to improve the creation and use of quantitative data to identify future enhancement opportunities (Enhancement).

About the provider

The London School of Science and Technology (LSST) is a private higher education provider which was founded in 2003. It operates from three campuses. The main campus is in Wembley, London. In 2012 a campus was opened in Luton and in 2014 in Birmingham.

The School's mission is to be recognised as a leading provider of further and higher education that is inclusive, inspiring and free from barriers to learning. It aims to support individuals of all backgrounds, abilities and aspirations to fulfil their potential through learning, achievement and progression.

LSST offers undergraduate programmes in the fields of Business, Management, Computing and IT and Health and Social Care with three awarding bodies: the University of West London (UWL), London Metropolitan University (LMU) and Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) ranging from foundation degrees to final year top-up programmes and full honours programmes with or without foundation year. All students are funded by the Student Loan Company (SLC). Pearson provision, previously offered by the School, has been phased out and there are no legacy students. Seven hundred and three students are enrolled on programmes in London, 445 in Luton and 527 in Birmingham.

The School first registered students with the University of West London in 2013. It currently offers a final year top-up programmes in Business Studies, the BA (Hons) Business Studies with foundation year and two BSc programmes with foundation years in Health Promotion and Public Health and Information Technology management for Business in partnership with UWL. Since 2017 these programmes also run at the Luton campus and the two Business Studies programmes also run in Birmingham. In 2017 LSST also started to run foundation degree programmes in Business, Hospitality Management, Public Health and Social Care in collaboration with LMU. The Foundation Degree in Computing and Business Information Technology was added in 2018. These programmes run at the London campus. The School developed a new partnership with BNU and two degree programmes in Business Management and Health and Social Science started in 2018 at all three campuses.

LSST was subject to a QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) in December 2017, which concluded that the quality of the information about learning opportunities required improvement and the enhancement of student learning opportunities did not meet UK expectations. A total of 16 recommendations were made. The School produced an action plan in response. The review team considered the progress made by LSST in implementing the recommendations and actions and concludes that most have been satisfactorily addressed. Some actions have only been completed very recently and it was too early at the time of the review to determine the impact they have had on managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (see affirmations in Expectations B5, Information, Enhancement).

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1   Click to select judgement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   The degree-awarding bodies retain full control over the awards delivered by the School ensuring that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold standards. Their academic frameworks, regulations and programme approval procedures also ensure that qualifications meet the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), consider and take account of relevant qualification characteristics and Subject Benchmark Statements. The School maintains the academic standards set by the awarding partners by implementing their academic regulations. Its recently reviewed academic governance structure and quality procedures ensure compliance with regulatory guidelines and awarding body requirements. Each committee in the governance structure is aligned to the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) with terms of reference informed by the Committee of University Chairs' (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.2   To test the Expectation the review team examined a wide variety of documentary evidence, including degree awarding body agreements, the School's Quality Handbook,

quality enhancement framework and external examiners reports. The team also met with senior, academic and professional support staff, and awarding body representatives.

1.3   The School has mapped its quality policies and procedures and learning strategies to the Expectations of the Quality Code and clearly outlines them in the Quality Handbook, thus providing a central reference point for all staff. They are subject to regular review and approval through the deliberate committee structure. The recent appointments of an academic governor, a Head of Quality and a specialist higher education adviser to the governors are intended to provide strengthened expertise and capacity at institutional level to maintain academic standards. The awarding bodies are confident in the School's ability to manage academic threshold standards as demonstrated in partnership annual monitoring review reports and discussions with the review team. Minutes of key deliberative committees show that the School implements the awarding bodies' academic frameworks and regulations appropriately.

1.4   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low as the degree-awarding bodies have full responsibility for the setting of academic standards of awards within their academic frameworks. The School is appropriately maintaining academic standards through its academic governance framework and quality policies and procedures.

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

1.5   The School does not have its own academic framework and regulations but conforms to those of its awarding bodies. The School fulfils its responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of academic standards as stipulated in the contractual agreement with each awarding body. Requirements are restated in the responsibility checklists. Annual academic partnership review and academic liaison meetings form the basis for ensuring the School complies with its obligations. The School's policies and procedures governing the award of credit are embedded in the Quality Handbook and are subject to a review cycle specified in the quality monitoring calendar.

1.6   The deliberative academic committees oversee the business of the School with the Board of Governors having institutional oversight. Within the recently reviewed academic governance structure responsibility for the management and maintenance of academic standards rests with the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) which reports to the Academic Board. The remit of the Academic Board is to ensure that the delivery of higher education programmes is in accordance with awarding body requirements, relevant legislation, external guidelines and benchmarks. The Academic Board reports to the Executive Committee, which has strategic oversight of all academic provision and approves academic policies and procedures.

1.7   Academic management of the School is delegated to the Principal and the Deputy CEO. The Quality Handbook provides a brief overview on the role of key academic committees and the responsibilities academic managers and staff for the maintenance of academic standards. The master action plan indicates accountability for actions with regard to the maintenance of academic standards and is a key management tool for the Principal. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.8   In testing the Expectation, the review team examined a range of documents relating to the academic governance structure and relevant meeting minutes. The team also met with senior and academic staff, and awarding body representatives.

1.9   Staff the review team met are fully familiar with the awarding bodies' academic framework and regulations. Academic partnership annual reports, awarding body annual review meetings, academic liaison reports and external examiners reports confirm that the School fully adheres to the relevant academic frameworks and regulations. The minutes of the UWL annual partnership meeting demonstrate that the School adopts exactly the same learning, teaching and assessment strategies as the University. School staff attend examination boards as required and lecturers are in constant communication with module leaders at the University in order to maintain consistency of the student experience. The LMU external examiner considers academic standards are being appropriately maintained and the LMU annual report shows no concerns about academic standards. The partnership with BNU is very recent and no reports from the awarding body were yet available.

1.10   In response to two recommendations made in the 2017 QAA review, 'to ensure full recognition of and take appropriate responsibility for institutional oversight of academic

standards' and 'to review and implement effective academic governance and management structures' the School has remapped its quality policies and processes against the Quality Code, clearly indicating its responsibilities for academic standards and quality, and reviewed its academic governance arrangements.

1.11   The full implementation of the new governance structures is still to be completed. While minutes and actions from the Executive Committee and the Academic Board shown in the master action plan demonstrate that the School is recognising and taking appropriate responsibility for the institutional oversight of academic standards, some further work remains to be done. For example, there is still some duplication of responsibilities and reporting lines and a variation of committee titles between the governance terms of reference document, the Quality Handbook and master action plan. Similarly, the Programme Development and Review Group's responsibilities recorded in its terms of reference and in the Quality Enhancement Framework differ. Reporting lines between the Executive Committee, Management Board, Academic Board and its sub-groups and the Quality Enhancement Committee as shown in the School structure diagram are unclear. The School acknowledged that some further adjustments to the Committee's terms of reference are needed and recognised that the implementation of the revised structure is in its early stages and yet to be fully tested over an extended period of time. The review team **recommends** the School ensure that reporting lines between committees are clear and well defined within the terms of reference of the governance structure to secure oversight of academic standards and quality.

1.12   The School adheres to and effectively implements the awarding bodies' academic frameworks and fully adheres to their academic regulations. The School's oversight of academic standards through its governance structures is not fully effective yet. Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

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

Findings

1.13   Definitive course records including course specifications are held in validation documentation, course and module handbooks. The partnership agreements between the School and its awarding bodies, and the respective responsibility checklists make it clear that the awarding bodies are responsible for the production of definitive course documents and course specifications. For BNU courses the awarding partner provides course handbooks and module guides, to which the School contributes School-specific information on course management and resources.

1.14   The relevant awarding bodies are also responsible for approving minor modifications to programmes and amendments to the definitive course records. The awarding partners inform the School of any amendments through their Link Tutors who communicate directly with Course Leaders, the School Quality Office being notified at the same time. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.15   The review team tested the Expectation by considering agreements with the awarding partners, documents relating to the approval of minor modifications, course handbooks and programme specifications, and minutes of course committees and the Programme Development and Review Group. The team also held meetings with senior academic staff and awarding body representatives.

1.16   The process for the modification of programmes works effectively. The School understands, and has used the awarding bodies' processes for modifying existing programmes. Minutes of one Course Committee note changes to the programme specification, which had been made by the awarding body and communicated to the School. Awarding body documentation relating to minor modification of two foundation degree programmes demonstrate that the School has responded to consultations with students in altering the assessment pattern of the programmes and complied with awarding body procedures.

1.17   The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low as the awarding bodies maintain control of programme approval and amendment procedures and the course definitive documentation. The School understands its responsibilities in working with them to deliver the programmes as defined in the programme specifications.

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 School delivers programmes that have been designed and approved by its awarding bodies, which have the overall responsibility for ensuring that programmes align with the appropriate level of the FHEQ and academic standards are set at a level that meets the UK threshold standard. Their policies and procedures for programme design and approval ensure that academic standards at the School are fully aligned with their requirements. The awarding bodies are also responsible for approving minor modifications to programmes. The School generally has no responsibility for programme design, with the exception of one programme validated by London Metropolitan University for which it had some input into the indicative content and reading lists, while the learning outcomes remained entirely those of the awarding body.

1.19   The School has a Programme Development and Review Policy, which states that when considering a programme, the School must ensure that academic standards are commensurate with the proposed award. The Programme Development and Review Group (PDRG) has within its remit the oversight and consideration of academic development and enhancement of the School's provision and consideration of amendments to taught programmes of study. The policies and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.20   The review team tested the Expectation by considering the newly developed Programme Development and Review Policy, the terms of reference of the PDRG and other committees and related minutes of meetings. The team also held meeting with staff responsible for the development of programmes including members of the PDRG, the Quality Manager, senior staff and representatives of the awarding partners.

1.21   In response to the recommendation of the HER (AP) Review of 2017 'to implement and keep under review a policy and formal procedure for the internal development, modification and approval of programmes' the School has developed a Programme Development and Review policy and established a Programme Development and Review Group (PDRG). While the School now has a policy and process in place for the approval of new programmes there is some lack of consistency in the remit of the PDRG between the PDRG flowchart, the Programme Development and Review Policy and the Quality Handbook (see recommendation in Expectation B1).

1.22   Proposals for new courses are created by the Marketing and Admissions department before being considered by the PDRG. The PDRG flowchart indicates that following discussions with members of the group, recommendations to proceed or not are made to each of the Academic Board, Executive Committee and the Quality Enhancement Committee who in turn advise the Board of Governors, which makes the final decision on whether to proceed. Minutes of the PDRG show extensive consideration of the amendments to assessment schedules and the recommendation that resulted. While the remits of the PDRG, Academic Board, the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors make no reference to the approval of academic standards for new programmes before proposals are

submitted for scrutiny to the awarding bodies, staff who met the review team stated that this would be a consideration during the meeting (see recommendation Expectation A2.1).

1.23   As the awarding bodies retain responsibility for the setting of academic standards including externality during programme development the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied**.

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

Findings

1.24   All of the School's programmes are delivered through validated arrangements with the awarding bodies. The respective awarding body ensures that credit is only awarded where students have met the learning outcomes required within assessments, and that UK threshold standards have been met through its programme development and approval procedures. In order to achieve this, the School is required to adhere to the assessment policies and procedures outlined within the relevant collaboration agreements. Under these arrangements the awarding bodies approve the module learning outcomes and associated assessment strategies during validation, ensuring that they meet the requirements of the Quality Code and any relevant professional body benchmarks.

1.25   All modules in each of the programmes are formally assessed. In the case of UWL and BNU, the assessments are set by the respective university, and those for the LMU programmes are set by the School. Assessment Boards held by the awarding bodies and attended by School staff confirm the achievement of learning outcomes and the award of credit and qualifications. The arrangements in place would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.26   In testing this Expectation, the review team examined a range of documentary evidence, including validation agreements with the respective awarding partners, awarding partner approval documentation and responsibility checklists, external examiner reports, and programme specifications. The team also met with senior and academic staff.

1.27   The awarding bodies' requirements with regard to assessment are well understood by staff. All assessments are subject to approval by external examiners appointed by the awarding partners, ensuring the maintenance of appropriate standards. Moderation processes are in compliance with awarding body guidelines. The external examiners reports for LMU and UWL confirm the effectiveness of assessment procedures and that appropriate standards are met. Assessments set by the School for LMU programmes are appropriate. The programmes delivered under the arrangements with BNU commenced in September 2018 and therefore no external examiner reports have yet been received.

1.28   The review team found that the arrangements with the awarding bodies and the School's internal processes are effective and understood by relevant members of staff. The Expectation is, therefore, met and the associated level of 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

1.29　　The School discharges its responsibilities for programme monitoring and review through liaison with awarding partner counterparts ensuring compliance with their requirements. The arrangements for programme monitoring and review are set out in the School's Quality Handbook. The School has its own internal process including termly evaluative module reports, which then feed into annual programme evaluation and monitoring. The resulting reports are scrutinised by the Quality Enhancement Committee and lead to an action plan for each programme. The School has recently introduced an over-arching self-assessment report to the Academic Board with the aim of ensuring strategic oversight of the academic health of provision across the School. This is supplemented by additional processes conducted by the relevant awarding partner. In particular, each of the awarding bodies also conducts an annual review of the partnership arrangements and reports are produced.

1.30　　At present there is no discrete internal process, beyond annual monitoring, to contribute to periodic review of the programmes. Responsibilities checklists indicate that this is the primary responsibility of the awarding bodies. These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.31　　The review team examined documentary evidence, including module and course reviews and the ensuing action plans and minutes of meetings where the reviews are considered. The team also met with senior and academic staff, and students.

1.32　　The annual monitoring process is well established within the School and staff at all levels understand the importance of the process and their particular roles within it. Annual programme reports, compiled by Programme Leaders, are noted in relevant Course Committee meetings through standing agenda items in advance of consideration by the QEC at its autumn meeting. Minutes of the QEC meeting reveal detailed scrutiny of the reports and, therefore, effective oversight. The first self-assessment report was also produced in 2018 and is a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the School's academic performance over the preceding academic year. It was considered by Academic Board and strengthens the School's oversight and management of its academic standards.

1.33　　The School makes effective use of its own internal monitoring processes to ensure that the programmes meet UK threshold academic standards and awarding partner requirements. The Expectation is, therefore, met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation:　Met
Level of risk:　Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.34   The degree-awarding bodies are responsible for the use of external and independent expertise at key stages of the setting and maintenance of academic standards for the programmes delivered at the School. Responsibilities and requirements are set out in the contractual agreements with the awarding partners and in the responsibility checklists. Externality is assured by the awarding bodies during programme approval and periodic review processes and annually through their external examiners. The School makes use of external examiners and their reports as well as awarding body academic liaison staff working in conjunction with the School's academic staff. The School also makes use of independent external expertise on its governing body. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.35   To test the Expectation the review team scrutinised a range of documentation including contractual agreements and responsibility checklists, programme approval and review reports, external examiner reports, minutes of relevant committees, and academic liaison reports. The team also met with senior and academic staff, and awarding body representatives.

1.36   The School has clear processes for the consideration of external examiner reports. At institutional level the Quality Enhancement Committee has appropriate oversight of the consideration of all external reports. At programme level Course Committees, reporting to the QEC, take the required actions on recommendations made in external examiner reports. Actions arising from external examiner reports are recorded in the master action plan and their completion is monitored. This process is repeated for all reports produced or received by external bodies before their findings are reported to the Executive Committee.

1.37   The most recent external examiner reports confirm that they School maintains appropriate academic standards. While the programmes delivered by the School are not accredited by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), the School considers that it is sufficiently aligned to the ethos of PSRBs through its involvement with employers and guest speakers who provide industry relevance. Senior managers also regard academic teaching staff as external experts, many of whom have considerable industry experience and thus are able to bring an external perspective to the programme's delivery and content.

1.38   Academic liaison staff from the awarding partners provide useful advice and guidance on academic issues to the School's academic teaching staff. UWL link tutor reports confirm that the good practice in the management of academic standards continues and the useful work done by University and School staff in a standardisation meeting.

1.39   The School adequately fulfils its limited responsibilities in use of independent and external expertise. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and 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/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.40 In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. All seven Expectations in this judgement area have been met and the level of risk is judged to be low in six of them. One Expectation attracted a recommendation with regard to the clarity of reporting lines of committees and the level of risk is judged to be moderate.

1.41 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies at the provider is **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 Programme design, development and approval are the overall responsibility of the awarding bodies. The School has developed a Programme Development and Review Policy which gives details of the matters for consideration in the internal approval of new programmes including the availability of appropriate resources. The School has also published a flowchart which shows the pathway to internal approval for new programme developments.

2.2 The Programme Development and Review Group provides the forum for the consideration of the development and review of all programmes. Its remit includes the review of new developments and existing partnerships to ensure that proposals are underpinned by appropriate market research and link clearly to the School's Strategic Plan. The remit also includes the review of the effectiveness of programme resources and to make recommendations where there is need for additional resources to support the maintenance of academic standards and quality. The PDRG advises the Academic Board, the Executive Committee and the Quality Enhancement Committee on proposed developments in making recommendations to the Board of Governors for final approval of proposed programmes. The policies and procedures in place would allow for the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The review team tested the Expectation in meetings with senior and academic staff. The team also considered the School's policies and procedures including the Programme Development and Review Policy, the Quality Handbook and the PRDG flowchart as well as the remit of the PDRG and minutes of its meetings.

2.4 The Programme Development and Review Policy sets out some parameters for programme development and approval but makes no reference to a procedure or the newly formed PDRG. The PDRG flowchart does describe a process for programme development but it is not linked to the policy. The School Quality Handbook contains reference to the module review and amendment process but does not include reference to a procedure for the approval of new programmes. The review team, therefore, **recommends** that the School ensures that policies and procedures relating to the approval of new programmes are clear and consistent.

2.5 PDRG operates according to its remit. In practice the School has not approved any new programmes in the last year but has moved ahead with the development of the partnership with BNU. Minutes of the relevant PDRG meeting show consideration of resources in the development of programmes with BNU and resource issues are further discussed in meetings of the Executive Committee and the Management Board. However, it is not clear what criteria would be used to assess new programmes within each stage of the internal approval process and whether all of the lower committees have to approve a development before final approval by the Board of Governors. The review team, therefore, **recommends** that the School establishes clear criteria for the recommendation of new courses and developments by the committees involved in the approval process.

2.6   The School's process for minor modifications to existing programmes has been used effectively to approve amendments to the assessment schedule of an existing programme in response to student feedback.

2.7   Overall, the School's policies and procedures for the internal approval of programmes and the establishment of the PDRG ensure the Expectation is met. Due to the inconsistencies within the School's documentation for the approval of new programmes the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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 School maintains an admissions policy which sets out the application process and requirements for entry to its higher education programmes. The document is reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee on an annual basis. There is a discrete procedure for complaints related to the admissions process.

2.9   Information about admissions for applicants is provided through the School's website, and at open days. The School has a variety of documents to clarify the application process including flowcharts for both applicants and staff. There is also a video laying out the admissions process for prospective applicants. All applicants are interviewed. Provision for entry on the basis of prior learning exists. Admissions decisions are made by the Admissions Panel, which also considers appeals against admission decisions. The panel reports to the Admissions and Marketing Committee, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the Admissions Policy. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.10   The review team tested the School's approach to recruitment, selection and admission through meetings with senior staff, staff responsible for the admissions process, and students. The review team also examined a range of documents relating to admissions, including the admissions policy, information and guidance available to staff, complete admissions files, admissions interviews and associated minutes from relevant panel meetings.

2.11   The School has appropriate admissions policies and procedures in place which it implements effectively. The various steps of the admissions process and responsibilities for each step are clearly detailed within the recently reviewed Admissions Policy and the accompanying flowcharts usefully clarify the admissions process for applicants. The newly developed brochure for applicants on the process of application, selection and admissions expands on this information and provides a more comprehensive overview of the admissions process. Students who met the review team confirmed that they had sufficient information available to make an informed decision.

2.12   The 2017 QAA review recommended that the School 'clarifies for all stakeholders the process for the selection and admission of students and ensures that interview outcomes are fully documented.' The School resolved the issue around the lack of clarity of where admissions decisions were made. In line with its Admissions Policy admissions decisions are now clearly made by the Admissions Panel. The panel meets weekly during the admissions season and its membership includes admissions, academic and professional support staff. The panel uses a checklist which records the documents provided by the applicant, the outcomes of any assessments and interviews and student funding application. Admissions decisions and their rationale are clearly documented in the minutes of the Admissions Panel meetings. Staff who met the review team understood their respective responsibilities in the admissions process.

2.13   Standardised applicant interview sheets document the range of areas explored with the applicant during interview including previous qualifications, motivation to study and support needs. They also include the criteria for rating each applicant. There is still some ambiguity in the documentation under which circumstances a second interview would be required. While the Admissions Policy specifies two instances, that is cases of applicants with a declared disability or a criminal conviction, the admissions flowchart lists a third scenario concerning applicants who had previously taken out a student loan, which is not reflected in the policy (see recommendation Information).

2.14   The School maintains a specific policy for appeals and complaints in relation to admissions decisions which is detailed within the Admission Policy. Applicants whose application has been rejected are informed of their right to appeal in the outcome of application communication and provided with the admissions appeal form. While information on admissions appeals and complaints as well as relevant forms are easily accessible on the website, the video for applicants explaining the admissions policy contains a dead link to the appeals process.

2.15   The School regularly reviews it admissions processes and undertakes an admissions satisfaction survey, the results of which are discussed by the Admissions and Marketing Committee. Committee minutes also demonstrate detailed consideration of admissions reports and the identification of good practice and required improvements to the process. Actions arising from these activities feed into the School's master action plan.

2.16   The School ensures that its admissions policies and procedures are valid and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. The Expectation is, therefore, met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.17   The Learning and Teaching Handbook is the definitive document for teaching staff setting out the School's approach to learning, teaching and assessment which is further underpinned with guidance on academic standards, assessment strategies and internal moderation in the Quality Handbook. Overall responsibility for learning and teaching at institutional level rests with the Academic Board and the Quality Enhancement Committee which monitor the effectiveness of learning and teaching approaches. Course Committees monitor programme delivery and identify training needs for academic staff. The recently formed Data Management Panel aids the provision of consistent and accurate data, including those generated through learning and teaching processes, and their management.

2.18   Teaching practices are reviewed and enhanced through developmental peer review and graded management observations of teaching. Academic staff are expected to take responsibility for their professional and career development and are supported in this through a range of in-house and external staff development opportunities. The Learning and Teaching Forum supports staff in further developing and understanding higher education pedagogy and the identification and sharing of good practice. Student feedback is used to review and enhance the quality of learning opportunities. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.19   To test the Expectation the review team examined guidance for staff related to learning and teaching, minutes of relevant committee meetings, lesson observation schedules and reports, and staff development records. The team also held meetings with students, senior, teaching and professional services staff across campuses.

2.20   The Learning and Teaching Handbook and the Quality Handbook provide definitive and comprehensive guidance to academic staff on planning for teaching and learning including the development of innovative teaching practices, assessments and personal development planning for students. Teaching staff confirmed their use of the handbooks and reported that the focus on the use of theory and practice in higher education pedagogy provides appropriate support for their teaching.

2.21   The 2017 HER (AP) report recommended that the School, 'develop a strategic approach to learning and teaching including the analysis and evaluation of student data throughout the deliberative committee structure'. In response to this recommendation the School created a Data Management Panel. The remit of the panel, which reports to the Executive Committee, the Quality Enhancement Committee, Academic Board and Registry is to streamline the process of data release, in the form of reports to committees within the academic governance structure. The School has started to implement a system of systematic student data consideration in all appropriate groups within the new governance structure. Staff confirmed that data generation is now enabling an appropriate level of discussion at relevant committees and gave a couple of recent examples that had made a positive impact. Actions arising from Data Management Panel meetings are captured in the School's RAG- rated master action plan and their progress is monitored.

2.22   The Academic Support Centre's annual report to the Quality Enhancement Committee demonstrates useful analysis of student attendance data for personal academic tutoring with daily log reports, workshop and seminar attendance evaluated and summarised. Detailed data analysis with regard to improved retention and student achievement and above sector average National Student Survey (NSS) results are also integral to the School's new self-assessment report to Academic Board. In addition, there is some evidence of student focused data, specifically requested by committee chairs, being considered as a standard agenda item. Campus Deans can request specific data reports; for example trend data on student profiles.

2.23   The School's peer review process is implemented effectively and in accordance with the School's procedure. The process is developmental in nature. Each observation results in a report identifying strengths and areas for improvement. These reports feed into a programme peer review report. Academic staff who the review team met described how peer observations enabled them to share best practice on teaching strategies. Campus Deans typically conduct training sessions for academic staff based on issues observed, as well as good practice identified.

2.24   The results of formal graded observations by line managers inform annual staff appraisals. The time table for these observations seen by the review team is somewhat time constrained to allow the observer time to reflect, evaluate and record in-depth findings. However, the lesson observation summary reports and peer observation reports examined show helpful, practical and evaluative commentary and proposed staff training focuses on student-centred learning.

2.25   Academic staff are suitably qualified and have appropriate subject qualifications to teach at the relevant subject level. Most hold master's degrees and have relevant industry experience. Three members of staff the review team met are studying to PhD level. All teaching staff are required to work towards a teaching qualification within the first two years of employment at the School. Enrolment on such a programme is part-funded by the School and some teaching remission is granted. All teaching staff are either Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellows or applying for Advance HE fellowship, which the School also supports financially. The School hosts a number of CPD workshops, mainly related to learning, teaching and assessment. Teaching staff also have access to staff development provided by the awarding partners. Academic staff value the School's contributions to developing their professional qualifications and enhancing their subject expertise.

2.26   Students are encouraged to provide their views on learning and teaching through both informal and formal mechanisms. The School routinely collects student feedback in a variety of ways and at different points during the academic year, in particular through mid-term and end-of-module student surveys and Students' Union Committee meetings. 'You Said, We Did' posters communicate actions taken back to students including those relating to learning and teaching.

2.27   The School has effective systems in place to manage and assure the quality of learning and teaching. The formation of the Data Management Panel and the systematic consideration of data support a strategic approach to teaching and learning. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and 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

2.28   The School provides a wide range of support for students including induction programmes, academic and pastoral support services as well as careers advice and support for work placements. The School's approach to student support is underpinned by a range of policies including the Student Support and Disability Policy and the Equality and Diversity Policy. The Academic Support Centre is the hub for all academic support activities. A Personal Academic Tutoring (PAT) system is in place and all students have a personal development plan (PDP). The Student Support Team is the point of contact for students' non-academic support needs. Students have access to a variety of learning resources, including online resources, both through campus learning resource centres and the degree-awarding bodies. The library and VLE policies outline students' access to these resources and define their acceptable use. The Student Handbook, available on the VLE, details all academic and pastoral support arrangements available to students.

2.29   Various committees are responsible for the oversight of different aspects of the support services and resources. The Academic Support Centre Panel is responsible for the effective implementation of all aspects of academic support. The Personal Tutor Committee manages the personal tutoring system and approves, reviews and evaluates students' personal development plans. Institutional oversight of pastoral support arrangements is the responsibility of the Student Support and Welfare Committee. Students and their representatives give feedback on the quality of support, the student support services and learning resources through surveys, in Course Committee and Students' Union Committee meetings. Course Committees also monitor the adequacy of programme resources. Institutional oversight of physical and human resources is managed within the deliberative committee structure. The Management Board reports on physical, electronic and human resources and the Academic Board on academic support resource needs. Both groups advise the Executive Committee. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.30   To test the Expectation the review team examined a range of policy and guidance documents for students and staff with regard to student support and learning resources as well as annual support services reports and minutes of relevant committees. The team also met with students, academic and professional support staff.

2.31   In response to the recommendation from the 2017 QAA review 'to develop a cycle of routine monitoring and evaluation of student support services to provide effective institutional oversight' the School revised the terms of reference of the Academic Support Centre Panel and the Student Support and Welfare Committee, which now includes monitoring of the effectiveness of academic and pastoral support arrangements. Minutes of the Student Support and Welfare Committee, the Personal Tutor Committee and Course Committees confirm that appropriate consideration is given to the provision and development of services to support students' development and progress. The Student Support and Welfare Committee routinely reviews the performance of student support services. The Personal Tutor Committee operates according to its terms of reference and considers improvements to the PAT system and the PDP process. The new committee reporting structures also ensure that relevant aspects of student support are represented and considered appropriately at high level committees with the Head of Student Support being a member of the Academic Board, the Quality Enhancement Committee and the Management Board.

2.32   Student support is standardised across campuses with student induction arrangements, learning resources and support mechanisms being replicated at each campus and adherence to protocols overseen by the Quality Unit. There is also frequent liaison between key campus support staff and the Principal. To ensure parity of the student experience cross-campus support activities are monitored by the Head of Student Support.

2.33   The academic support arrangements are working well and are effective in developing students' academic, personal and professional potential. For the first time in 2018 the Academic Support Centre produced a comprehensive report on its activities which was considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee. This shows that students made increased use of the one to one support sessions and specialist skills workshops offered by the centre and aimed at improving their academic writing and research skills, communication and problem solving skills. Workshops have been expanded to take place where necessary and some, e.g. research skills, take place during tutorial time in order to provide students with what they require at a time when it is required. Attendance at all academic support sessions is monitored.

2.34   Academic and professional support staff who met the review team reported there was good interaction between students and academic staff who are approachable and readily available through formal and ad hoc processes. Communication with students is frequently through the VLE, mobile applications and social media. One-to-one support is often on request and academic staff can refer students to compulsory support classes where necessary. Staff reported that the one-to-one support has resulted in higher assessment submission rates. Students confirmed that they are fully aware of the resources for academic support and value them greatly.

2.35   The Personal Academic Tutoring system is evolving in response to ongoing internal reviews of the system and in line with awarding body requirements. All students are allocated a PAT who has timetabled office hours and students are expected to meet with them once or twice per term. PATs at all campuses receive adequate training by the Lead PAT or campus PAT Coordinators. The School recently conducted a thorough analysis of the PAT system. The resulting report identified a number of issues and proposed solutions, which are gradually being implemented. Professional support staff highlighted the progress made with students' personal development plans and noted increased student engagement as a direct result of personal academic tutorials.

2.36   Students who met the review team reported that they are aware of the PAT contact hours. The meetings with their PATs are helpful, particularly in assignment preparation, and extra academic skills workshops have been provided. However, students also stated that there is variation in the quality of academic support between campuses. Data analysis shows that student attendance at the formal bookable and timetabled tutorials is generally working well. These tutorials operate alongside alternative email or social media interactions and students stated they very much appreciated the more spontaneous, informal access to and interaction with tutors. Students also reported that the School had aided them in making a successful transition into higher education and talked enthusiastically about how their courses prepare them for employment through work placements, trips to specialist employer events, and career guidance.

2.37   The Student Support Service assists students with disabilities, special learning needs and mental health conditions. The quality of support for students with disabilities is realistically demonstrated by records showing the number of disabled students on each campus site, their support needs and equipment provided. Daily logs and specific log on students with disability are shared with campus Deans. Attendance monitoring data is shared with Programme Leaders and followed up with students to determine the reasons for absenteeism.

2.38   The School is making appropriate investments into learning resources and is improving resources with the acquisition of a new campus in Birmingham. Each campus has a well-stocked Learning Resource Centre and the IT learning infrastructure supports student learning well. Students who met the review team are generally satisfied with the learning resources provided. They realise that the School has invested in readily accessible computing resources and reported that resources in the library are good. They also confirmed that they have access to online resources from the awarding bodies. The School's virtual learning environment (VLE) hosts learning materials that are used across campuses to ensure standardisation and parity of experience. Students confirmed that the learning materials are helpful and easily accessible.

2.39   The School routinely monitors the adequacy of learning resources. Course Committee minutes show that programme resources are regularly reviewed and issues raised by students are addressed adequately. Course annual reports for UWL programmes also include overarching resource concerns raised by students and their resolution. Institutional oversight of resources is adequately maintained by the Management Board, a sub-group of the Executive Committee receiving reports from the Operations Committee and Panel. The Academic Board routinely receives reports from Course Committees and the PDRG to advise the Executive Committee on resource needs to support the development of academic activities. This enables the effective review of physical and human resources and sufficient resource allocation.

2.40   The School has a comprehensive student support system in place which enables student to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Through its deliberative committee structure and the instigation of an annual review cycle for support services the School regularly reviews and monitors the performance and effectiveness of its student support arrangements. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.41   The Student Engagement Policy, which is available on the VLE, outlines students' involvement in the quality assurance and enhancement of their educational experience at module, programme and institutional level. The School has a Students' Union that has an independent constitution.

2.42   The Students' Union Committee which meets once per term is the forum for students to engage at School level. Membership of the committee includes the Student Union President and Vice-Presidents and representatives from all programmes and campuses. At programme level here is an established student representative system with one elected representative per study group. Student representatives are members of Course Committees. They have a role description and there is a development programme to support them in the fulfilment of their duties. On completion of their term of office they receive a certificate to acknowledge their contribution. At module level all students have the opportunity to feed into the module monitoring and review process through completion of surveys at various points during the academic year. Students also participate in the National Student Survey and results are analysed by the School. Mostly represented through the Students' Union President, students are members of a wide range of committees and panels including key academic committees like the Academic Board and the Quality Enhancement Committee. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.43   The review team tested this Expectation through the examination of student engagement policies and procedures, guidance for student representatives and relevant committee minutes. The team also held meetings with students and their representatives including the Student Union president, senior, academic and professional support staff.

2.44   Following the recommendation from the 2017 QAA review 'to ensure all students are fully engaged as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience', the School increased student representation on its deliberative committees. However, there is heavy reliance on the elected Students' Union President who now sits on a greater range of institutional level committees and panels. Campus representatives are members of committees with a remit for campus operations as well as student academic and pastoral support. Recent minutes from the committees show that student representatives generally attend these meetings. Where detailed minutes of discussions are taken, they clearly demonstrate that students are able to make meaningful contributions. Committee papers are circulated digitally ahead of meetings for comment and feedback. While the School's academic committee structure is generally aligned with the Higher Education Code of Governance of the Committee of University Chairs, it has not appointed a student to the Board of Governors.

2.45   The School has made efforts to engage the wider student body as partners in in the assurance of their educational experience. For example, when the School recently reviewed all its academic policies, drafts were shared with student representatives for comments and amendments. The student body was also actively consulted on the development of the Student Protection Plan with the Students' Union giving approval. The Students' Union President was involved in the drafting of the Student Engagement Policy. Furthermore, the recently developed Strategic Enhancement Plan demonstrates the School's efforts to actively engage students in the enhancement of learning opportunities and identifies student

engagement as a priority for the School. Student representatives who met the review team reported that the School actively sought their input into the plan. The plan is regularly reviewed and updated by the Quality Office in conjunction with the Student Union President and a range of academic and support staff. Students also have the opportunity to comment on assignments with a view to improving assessment literacy and students on LMU courses were consulted on the modification of assessments. These are positive moves and the review team **affirms** the steps the School is taking to fully engage students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

2.46   Students and their representatives the review team met stated that the School clearly hears the student voice and gave examples of issues they had raised and that had been resolved. For example, as a result of student feedback the School provided additional computers, improved the online learning resources and increased the academic support facilities. Class representatives reported that students feel confident to approach their representatives and trust them to take up their issues. They have the opportunity to fully participate in the cross-campus Course Committee meetings with minutes of the previous meeting, which contain follow-up on actions they raised previously, being sent to them in advance. Course committee minutes confirm that students have sufficient opportunities to provide feedback on the student experience and that the School takes appropriate actions. Student Union Committee minutes demonstrate that student issues from all campuses are appropriately considered and progressed.

2.47   Overall, the School takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The Expectation is, therefore, met and the associated 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

2.48   The School assesses students in accordance with the regulations and practices of the relevant awarding partners. This is supplemented by the School's assessment strategies and methods which are articulated in the Quality Handbook and the Learning and Teaching Handbook. The awarding bodies have responsibility for the setting the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Assessments for the programmes delivered under arrangements with the UWL and BNU are also set by the respective university. The School's responsibility for the setting of assessment briefs is limited to the programmes validated by LMU. The number and frequency of assessments can be found in the module study guides and programme handbooks.

2.49   The School is responsible for the first marking and internal moderation of student work and the provision of feedback to students on assessed work and processes are articulated in the Quality Handbook Guidance for staff on the marking and moderation arrangements for each awarding partner can be found in the School's Assessment Regulations and Procedures. The School applies the Pearson practice of internal moderation of assessment briefs to the assessments it sets for LMU programmes. Appropriate adjustments are made with regard to the assessment needs of particular learners and the criteria are set out in the Quality Handbook and the Reasonable Adjustment Policy. There is provision for the recognition of prior learning in line with the awarding partners' guidelines. Academic malpractice is dealt with under the School's Academic Misconduct Policy. The Mitigating Circumstances Policy outlines the process for the consideration of cases. Only LMU programmes fall under the School's own policy. UWL and BNU handle claims for their programmes directly.

2.50   Expectations for the provision of summative and formative feedback to students are articulated in the Quality Handbook and the Learning and Teaching Handbook Formative feedback is provided online through the VLE. Standardisation meetings are held when assessments are marked by more than one person to ensure consistency in the application of marking standards and these are formally recorded. Relevant matters relating to assessment are discussed at Course Committee meetings under standard agenda items and also feed into the annual programme reports considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.51   In testing the Expectation, the review team considered a range of documentation related to the processes of assessment, including the assessment policies and procedures within the Quality Handbook, external examiner reports, programme handbooks and the contractual arrangements with the awarding bodies. The team also met senior and academic staff along with students.

2.52   Assessment policies and procedures are clear and well understood by those involved in the assessment process. Guidance for staff and students on assessment is comprehensive. Formative and summative feedback is used routinely in the learning process. This is delivered in accordance with guidance by the respective awarding bodies. Students reported that they receive comprehensive guidance on assessment from academic

staff and through the module guides and handbooks, including details of the assessment criteria and what is needed to attain the higher grades. They also appreciate the timely and helpful feedback on their work.

2.53   Arrangements with the awarding partners for the setting, marking and internal moderation of assessments work well and the external examiners' reports reveal general satisfaction with the assessment process and standards obtained by the students. All Examination Boards are conducted by the respective awarding partners with relevant School staff participating.

2.54   There is evidence that the School reviews the effectiveness of the assessments it sets. For example, in 2018 the assessment strategy for the LMU programmes was amended as a result of student feedback and consultation, and subsequent approval secured from the university. Students are extensively made aware of what constitutes academic malpractice both at induction and in the course handbooks which also link to the policies and further guidance. Course handbooks also explain the arrangements for mitigating circumstances and signpost students to the relevant policies.

2.55   Overall, the review team found that the School operates equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment enabling students to demonstrate the extent to which they meet the learning outcomes. The Expectation is, therefore, met and the associated level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.56   The appointment, training and remuneration of external examiners is the responsibility of the awarding bodies. The School's Academic Board can, however, recommend the appointment of external examiners to the awarding partners. The Quality Handbook details the role and purpose of external examiners.

2.57   The School has a system for receiving and responding to actions arising from recommendations made in external examiner reports. A flow chart diagram shows at which point each report is considered at programme and institutional level. The School's master action plan tracks progress of actions arising from all external examiner reports at institutional level. The awarding partners formally respond to the external examiners with input from the School. Students are able to access external examiner reports on the VLE. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.58   To test the expectation the review team considered external examiner reports and resulting action plans as well as relevant committee minutes. The team also met with students, senior and academic staff, and awarding body representatives.

2.59   There is a clear and thorough process for the consideration of external examiner reports. In response to the recommendation in the 2017 HER (AP) report 'to clarify the responsibilities for the consideration of external examiner reports at institutional level' the School has assigned this responsibility to the Quality Enhancement Committee. The School has also changed the process for receiving external examiner reports. All reports are now received by the Quality Unit, which distributes them to Programme Leaders and Campus Deans. Minutes of the Quality Enhancement Committee show detailed consideration of the latest reports and action plans. Course Committee minutes demonstrate that external examiner reports are routinely considered by programme teams. The master action plan which tracks progress of actions currently shows no outstanding actions. The School's annual self- assessment report includes the analysis of external examiner reports. Student representatives are aware that external examiner reports are available on the VLE but not all of them have read them.

2.60   The 2017 QAA review also recommended for the School 'to ensure external examiner reports are routinely used to identify key themes across the provision to inform enhancement'. The School has yet to formally identify any definitive key themes arising from the external examiners reports across programmes. The most recent external examiner reports seen by the review team are generally positive with few recommendations. However, there are some emerging themes evident. For example, the LMU and UWL reports advise that attention needs to be paid to the specific nature and context of student research and there is concern about high non-submission rates. Programme annual monitoring reports reflect detailed consideration of external examiner reports and appropriate action planning in response to any recommendations made.

2.61   The School makes good use of external examiner reports. There is robust consideration of reports at programme level and institutional levels with appropriate action planning and monitoring of progress. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.62   The School's policies and processes for monitoring and evaluation of the programmes are set out in the Quality Handbook. This involves a number of strands. All modules are internally reviewed at the end of the term in which they are delivered. The Module Leader compiles a report, which includes an analysis of student feedback, assessment data and external examiner comments. These reports are then considered at Course Committee and Quality Enhancement Committee meetings.

2.63   Annual programme monitoring take the form of Course Annual Reports for UWL provision and Course Logs for LMU programmes. These reports comment on a range of indicators including recruitment and admissions, achievement and progression statistics, feedback from students and external examiners, student support, general learning and teaching issues, quality management and enhancement, areas of good practice and progress on previous action plans. The reports are discussed internally at Course Committee meetings and QEC. Action points are identified and these are tracked at the ensuing report. Similar provision is in place for BNU programmes. UWL and LMU also conduct annual partnership reviews which includes a review of annual monitoring or elements thereof. These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

2.64   The review team tested the Expectation through the analysis of a range of documentation covering the processes for annual review, including minutes of meetings of the Course Committees and QEC, and examples of annual monitoring and review reports. The team also met with senior and teaching staff, awarding body representatives and students.

2.65   The annual monitoring processes for all programmes are robust and embedded into the quality assurance processes of the School. Programme annual monitoring reports compiled by Programme Leaders are detailed and draw on a range of data and information sources. Appropriate action planning and progress monitoring is evident. Meetings of Course Committees contain a standing agenda item for consideration of module and course reports and there is evidence that annual reports are considered in the autumn meetings following the end of the academic year. The revised agenda for QEC meetings also includes a standing item for consideration of course and programme reports and minutes for October 2018 demonstrates appropriate consideration of these reports covering the previous year.

2.66   Internal processes also feed into the quality processes of the awarding partners who hold annual review meetings for the respective partnerships, covering key elements of the management and assurance of quality and standards, the effectiveness of the academic liaison and assessment processes, student evaluations, progression and achievement data and sufficiency of resources. These are supplemented by regular reports of link tutor visits. All reports by the respective awarding partners indicate satisfaction with the arrangements.

2.67   In response to the recommendation of the 2017 QAA review 'to implement a quality monitoring and review cycle to provide oversight of all higher education provision', the School has developed a draft quality monitoring calendar setting out key milestones for the year including dates of relevant committee meetings. This is supplemented by a new overarching self-assessment report designed for the purpose of providing oversight of the

academic health of provision across the School. The first detailed report of this kind, informed by the outcomes of annual monitoring reported to the QEC, was considered by the School's Academic Board in 2018. The review team considers that both initiatives make a positive contribution to the process of monitoring and review and in particular to the School's ability to maintain oversight of the academic provision.

2.68   As previously mentioned in Expectation A3.3 there no formal and discrete process, beyond annual monitoring, to contribute to periodic review of the programmes though the School understands its responsibility to contribute to the processes of the awarding partners at the appropriate time.

2.69   The School operates comprehensive and effective systematic processes for monitoring and review of its programmes, all clearly understood and implemented by relevant members of staff. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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

2.70   The School's formal processes for handling academic appeals and student complaints are set out in its Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and the Student Complaints Procedures. They are available to students on the institution's website and on the VLE. Associated appeals and complaints forms support students in the process. The student handbook also signposts students to the relevant policies and procedures. The Quality Handbook provides an overview of the complaints process for staff. The School has adopted the guidance of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) in its academic appeals and complaints policies and procedures. The Quality Enhancement Committee maintains institutional oversight of the procedures.

2.71   The School's responsibilities for academic appeals vary depending on the awarding body and the School's policy reflects the awarding partners' requirements. For LMU programmes students must exhaust the School's academic appeals procedures before they can escalate appeals to the awarding body should they remain dissatisfied. For UWL and BNU provision all academic appeals are considered by the awarding bodies. The School has no input into this process. It merely collates the appeals documentation and sends it on to the awarding bodies for consideration. The awarding bodies inform students directly of the outcome of appeals. The Appeals Panel which reports to the Registry Committee considers all appeals for LMU programmes. There is provision for the review of negative appeals decisions under certain circumstances. The School keeps a log of academic appeals.

2.72   For LMU and UWL provision all complaints are dealt with by the School under its procedures. For BNU provision formal complaints are considered by the University. The Student Complaints Panel, which is chaired by the Head of Registry and reports into Registry Committee conducts reviews of rejected complaints, where permitted. There is provision for the review of negative outcomes and the escalation of formal complaints to the awarding bodies and the OIA. The School keeps a record of formal and informal complaints received and reports the resolution of formal complaints to the Academic Board as part of the monitoring and quality assurance processes. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.73   The review team tested the Expectation through a review of appeals and complaints policies and procedures and guidance provided to students and staff. The team also held meetings with students and their representatives, senior, academic and professional support staff.

2.74   The Appeals Policy and Procedure states the decisions that can be appealed as well as the grounds and specifies the deadlines for consideration of appeals. It is clear and well understood by staff and students. Staff from the awarding partners confirmed that there is clarity as to the delegation of responsibilities. In response to the recommendation from the 2017 QAA review 'to revise the policy and procedure for appeals to ensure the requirements of the awarding bodies are met' the School reviewed and amended its policy and satisfactorily addressed the previous lack of clear information on the role of the degree-awarding bodies in considering appeals. The scope of the policy now clearly states which provision falls under the School's policy and which appeals are directly considered by the awarding bodies. There is now also reference to the awarding bodies' procedures for the

review of appeals decisions and links to the relevant procedures are provided. Minutes of the Appeals Panel demonstrate adherence to grounds and criteria for appeals in decision making. The appeals log diligently records the type of decision appealed, the grounds for appeal and supporting evidence as well details of the investigation and the outcome thus providing a sound basis for monitoring academic appeals at School level.

2.75   The Student Complaints Procedures are robust and students are generally aware of where to find them should they wish to make a formal complaint. The School encourages informal resolution of complaints and students reported that most issues are resolved this way. The procedure clearly states the areas that are covered under the procedure, the deadlines for the resolution of formal complaints and the review of decisions, where appropriate. It also explicitly signposts recourse to the OIA in event of continued student dissatisfaction. The complaints log tracks all informal and formal complaints. All complaints logged have been informal and the log shows successful resolution in each case.

2.76   In summary, the School has robust procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints which are fair, accessible, and enable enhancement. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.77   The School delivers a number of programmes that have a compulsory and assessed work-placement element. The London Metropolitan University Foundation degrees and the BSc in Public Health and Health Promotion (Top-up) contain work-based learning modules. Work placements are governed by the School's Work Placement Policy and supported by a work placement handbook. The Work Placement Unit (WPU) maintains oversight of the placement operation, facilitates the finding of suitable placements and supports students on placement. It also records and monitors employers' insurance and health and safety policies and other legal requirements. The policies, procedures and staffing structures that exist in the School would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.78   The review team tested the Expectation in meetings with students who have undertaken work placements and staff responsible for the organisation of placements including the work placement coordinator. The team also scrutinised the School's Work Placement Policy and handbook, the role of the Work Placement Unit across the four sites of delivery and examined examples of work-based learning logs from three programmes of study.

2.79   In response to the recommendation from the 2017 QAA review to 'put in place a policy and procedures to ensure that work placements are implemented securely, managed effectively and regularly reviewed' the School developed a comprehensive Work Placement Policy, which gives clear and detailed guidance to students and work placement providers on their responsibilities and defines the role of the Work Placement Unit (WPU) in the procurement and management of placements. Students are expected to arrange their own placements but the WPU will assist them, if required. Placements can be a mixture of arranged work experience placements and work produced for clients, initiated by the student. The WPU maintains a bank of around 200 employers who are prepared to offer work placements. As part of the placement vetting process potential placement providers are asked to supply the dates of their employer liability insurance and health and safety risk assessment. However, no site visits are made and the School does not request copies of the documentation for their files. As some of the premises and the nature of the placements could be considered to place students at a level of risk, the review team **recommends** that the School strengthens the arrangements for ensuring the health and safety aspects of student work placements.

2.80   On agreeing a work placement a signed agreement between the School, the employer and the student is created ensuring that all parties understand their responsibilities. Both students and employers are given a work placement handbook and further information on the work of the WPU. The benefits to employers of providing work placement opportunities are available on the website. Students keep a log of their work activities with the placement organisation confirming the record of evidence. The format of the log depends on the course and reflects its learning outcomes. Placements are reviewed and monitored by a work-based learning supervisor. Students are visited by a tutor at least once during placement unless it is of short duration. Placements are assessed in the relevant work-based learning module of each programme consisting of an individual placement report and reflective portfolio.

2.81   Placement providers who the review team met confirmed the arrangements made by the School and were enthusiastic about their contributions to the training of future entrants to their industries. The discussions demonstrated that placement providers make a valuable contribution to the learning of students who undertake work-based learning.

2.82   The policies and procedures in place at the School ensure that work-based learning is relevant to the programme learning outcomes and securely assessed. Placements are well managed but the School should strengthen its arrangements for ensuring the health and safety aspects of placements. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met but the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: 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*

Findings

2.83   The Expectation is not applicable as the School does not award research degrees.

Expectation: Not applicable
Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.84   In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. Out of the 11 Expectations in this judgement area 10 are applicable to the School. Expectation B11 is not applicable as the School does not award research degrees.

2.85   All the applicable Expectations are met and the associated level of risk is low for eight of them. Two Expectations carry a moderate risk and attracted a recommendation. The recommendations located in Expectation B1 relate to the clarity and consistency of policies and procedures for the approval of new programmes and the establishment of clear criteria for the recommendation of new programmes. Expectation B10 attracted a recommendation with regard to the strengthening of the arrangements for health and safety of student work placements.

2.86   There is one affirmation in this judgement area located in Expectation B5 affirming the steps the School is taking to fully engage students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

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

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The School publishes a range of information for students, staff and external stakeholders in print and digital formats. The School has a Public Information Policy and Approval Procedure, which details the process for the generation and approval of published information. The School has recently established a Publications Committee. Its terms of reference state that the primary aim and objective of the committee is to be the lead body responsible for the identification, commissioning and development of publications as required by the organisation in line with both internal and external requirements.

3.2 Information is generated at departmental level by the process owner who identifies and instigates new policies or procedures in association with departmental heads. When changes or additions to information for external stakeholders are required, the appropriate draft documentation is developed and circulated to members of the Publications Committee for consideration and evaluation prior to the meeting of the Committee. The process owner and/or departmental head presents the documentation to the committee outlining either new originated content, or modifications to existing documentation requesting contributions and observations. Information about the awarding bodies and their programmes also requires their approval prior to publication. For approval of internal policies and procedures the process owner submits draft documentation through the Quality Office for approval by the Executive Committee. The policies and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3 The review team tested the Expectation in meetings with students and staff including members of the Publications Committee and the Executive Committee. The team also scrutinised documentation relevant to the production and approval of information and minutes of relevant meetings.

3.4 There were two recommendations made in the 2017 QAA review relating to information. They required the School to ensure that all information for staff and students is accurate and trustworthy and that all staff understand, adhere to and implement the Public Information Policy and Procedure. In relation to the first recommendation the School reviewed all its policies and procedures prior to the start the current academic year. As a result, around 60 policies and procedures were approved or re-approved at a meeting of the Executive Committee. Students are now fully consulted on policies that are student facing.

3.5 The information approval process is not fully effective yet. There are a number of inconsistencies between documents approved that were not picked up at the time of approval resulting in legacy policies and procedures that are on occasion inconsistent with new documentation. For example, the Public Information Policy and Approval Procedure, refers to a Public Information Committee with different terms of reference to those of the Publications Committee contained in the School's governance terms of reference document. The terms of reference for the Publications Committee state that it should meet twice per quarter, once each for internal and external information approval. Minutes of the Committee show it operating effectively in considering the approval of new and revised policies but also

state that the Committee should meet as required. The new Published Information Policy approved in January 2019 resolves some of these issues. Similar inconsistencies have occurred within other areas including admissions, with a new Admissions Policy also being approved in January 2019 which will resolve some of the issues that existed previously. Senior staff met at the visit recognised that although a lot of progress has been made since the last review there was still some way to go to ensure complete consistency of documents containing information for the use of staff. The review team **affirms** the action being taken to ensure that all School policies and procedures are accurate and trustworthy.

3.6   In response to the second recommendation the School has developed several ways in which staff are kept informed about new and updated policies and procedures. The Principal emails all staff when a new or amended policy is published. Staff also have two days of staff development prior to the start of each semester when appropriate documents are brought to their attention. Policies are also available on the VLE. Most staff who met the review team were familiar with the policies and procedures appropriate to their role.

3.7   The School's website is the main point of reference for the public and includes information on the School's values and key policies and processes. The website also contains useful and comprehensive programme and application information for prospective students and information on student support and learning resources. The VLE hosts a range of reference information for staff and students including all School policies, procedures and regulations, learning and teaching and student handbooks, study skills learning materials, information on learning resources including referencing, student support and on keeping student records. The latest external examiner reports and results of the NSS can also be found here. The VLE is also a repository for programme information and provides access for students to module handbooks, lecture and seminar materials and assessments. The accuracy of information on the website and the VLE is regularly checked by relevant staff who are given responsibilities for pages that contain information for which they have oversight. In accordance with the agreements of its awarding bodies, the School sends information relating to their programmes for approval by them prior to publication. Students met at the visit confirmed that the VLE was a useful part of their learning experience. Course Handbooks which are available on the VLE are comprehensive and provide students with accurate information about their courses.

3.8   The formation of the Publications Committee together with the development of the revised Published Information Policy are positive changes which allows the School to generate and approve information for a variety of audiences that is fit for purpose and accessible. The Expectation is met but the level of risk is moderate as the School has not yet fully ensured consistency within all of its policies and procedures.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

3.9   In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is moderate. There are no recommendations or good practice. There is one affirmation in this judgement area affirming the actions being taken by the School to ensure that all policies and procedures are accurate and trustworthy.

3.10   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the provider **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 School has recently developed a Quality Enhancement Framework which expresses its strategic commitment to the further enhancement of the student learning experience and provides the infrastructure for the development and implementation of enhancement initiatives. It identifies six quality enhancement principles and is designed to build capacity, capability and stakeholder ownership of quality systems, assure academic standards and quality of higher education provision and effect sustainable cultural change in the management systems at all levels across the School. The framework is supported by a range of institutional level strategies such as the teaching, learning and assessment strategies, articulated in the Learning and Teaching Handbook, the Human Resources Strategy and the Staff Development and Student Engagement Policies. The School's Strategic Enhancement Plan is linked to the framework and identifies student and employer engagement as key priorities. The newly developed academic quality monitoring calendar is intended as a monitoring tool for the implementation of the School's quality assurance mechanisms, in particular the annual monitoring review framework.

4.2 Responsibility for the implementation of the enhancement framework and plan rests with the Quality Enhancement Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Board. The Learning and Teaching Forum supports the identification and sharing of good practice at institutional level. To support the new structures, a data management department and a Data Management Panel have been formed to ensure the quality and accuracy of student data for planning and monitoring purposes of relevant School committees. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3 To test the effectiveness of the School's approach to enhancement the review team scrutinised a range of documents relating to enhancement frameworks, strategies and plans, quality monitoring and review processes and procedures, along with minutes of relevant boards and committees. The team also met with senior managers, teaching and professional support staff and students.

4.4 In response to the first recommendation from the 2017 QAA review 'to implement and monitor a strategic approach to enhancement in a systematic and planned manner' the School updated its academic governance structure and developed an institutional level Quality Enhancement Framework supported by a Strategic Enhancement Plan and a draft academic quality monitoring calendar. The review team found that the strategic approach to enhancement was strengthened by this approach. Staff and students the review team met conveyed an ethos of continuous improvement which encourages the enhancement of students' learning opportunities. There is now a greater shared understanding of what enhancement means in the context of the School.

4.5 Responsibilities for the generation, implementation and monitoring of enhancement activities are clearly articulated in the terms of reference of the academic governance structure. The integration of enhancement initiatives is systematic and planned at provider level through standing agenda items on meetings of the Quality Enhancement Committee, Executive Committee, Academic Board, and Course Committees. This ensures regular oversight of the development, implementation and monitoring of enhancement initiatives, plans and frameworks. At appropriate points in the academic cycle the Quality Enhancement

Committee updates and informs the Academic Board on progress. In addition to this 'top-down' approach, Course Committees suitably identify enhancement initiatives at programme level during the course evaluation and monitoring processes. The revised governance structure, coupled with the cross-campus nature of the Course Committees, and the work of the Learning and Teaching forum all contribute to the identification and dissemination of good practice. Academic staff who the review team met described their contribution in the development of the Strategic Enhancement Plan. While the Quality Enhancement Framework and Strategic Enhancement Plan are fairly recent developments and have yet to be fully implemented and evaluated and the academic quality monitoring calendar needs to be fully developed, the review team **affirms** the steps being taken by the School to develop a more strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities.

4.6   In response to the second recommendation form the 2017 QAA review 'to implement a quality cycle to enable enhancements to be identified, monitored and reviewed for impact and informed by the use of robust and systematically generated data and information' the School strengthened its quality monitoring processes and developed mechanisms for the provision and consideration of data. It now systematically considers information generated by students, staff and external examiners at institutional level and makes effective use of the annual programme monitoring and review processes, student feedback and external examiner reports, resulting in an overarching annual School self-assessment report. The first comprehensive report of this kind was produced in 2018 and considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee. It draws on course monitoring and external examiner reports, results of the NSS and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) as well as monitoring reports from service areas and the Students' Union. The work of the Data Management Panel is beginning to ensure the generation of robust data that can be used across the School for academic planning and monitoring purposes. While the impact of the measures cannot be fully evaluated yet, the review team **affirms** the work being undertaken to improve the creation and use of quantitative data to identify future enhancement opportunities.

4.7   Overall, the School has demonstrably taken deliberate steps at provider level to enhance the quality of learning opportunities, however, systems have still to be fully embedded and the impact of any enhancement activities has yet to be evaluated. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.8   In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is moderate. There are two affirmations in this judgement area affirming the steps being taken by the School to develop a more strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities and the work being undertaken to improve the creation and utilisation of quantitative data to identify future enhancement opportunities. There are no recommendations or good practice identified in this judgement area.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

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

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

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