Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Luther King House Educational Trust

May 2017

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 Luther King House Educational Trust. The review took place from 8 to 10 May 2017 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Susan Blake
- Dr Richard Samuels
- 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/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

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 the degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice**.

- The strong collaborative ethos leading to a multi-denominational environment that enriches the student learning experience (Expectation B4).
- The focused learning support, which meets the needs of a diverse student body (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

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

By September 2017:

- make more explicit in committee agendas and minutes where decisions are taken and where consideration of data takes place (Expectation A3.3)
- strengthen the academic staff appraisal process to include student feedback and performance data (Expectation B3)
- strengthen student representation, improve training for representatives and further develop the processes for closing the feedback loop (Expectation B5)
- develop an implementation plan for the Learning and Teaching Strategy (Enhancement).

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 being taken to strengthen admissions criteria in relation to English language and study skills (Expectation B2)
- the move to a regular and consistent schedule for the consideration of data by committees at relevant points in the academic year (Expectation B8).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed.

About the provider

Luther King House Educational Trust (LKH) is a Christian centre for learning, seeking to help people grow in their faith and discipleship. In structure, it is a federal institution of theological colleges representing the Baptist, Methodist, United Reform and Unitarian traditions. In addition, there is an Open College that receives students from a variety of church backgrounds and an Urban Theology Unit based in Sheffield that offers postgraduate teaching and supervision. LKH is a company limited by guarantee and is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. The only significant change in this structure since the previous QAA visit in 2014 came at the end of the 2014-15 academic year, when one of the constituent colleges (Hartley Victoria) closed as a result of decisions made by the Methodist Church to centralise its theological teaching work in Birmingham.

In 1994 LKH became an affiliated college, teaching its own degree programmes validated by the University of Manchester. While in the recent past it partnered with the University of Chester in offering a foundation degree, the validation of all its higher education provision returned to the University of Manchester in 2012. The great majority of those currently preparing for ministry and ordination do so by studying for the BA in Contextual Theology.

In the current academic year, LKH has 133 students, consisting of 75 on the BA (Hons) programme, 42 on the MA (Hons) programme and 16 on the PhD. In total, 87 of these students are part-time, with the remaining 46 studying on a full-time basis. These figures have been broadly consistent over the previous three academic years.

The most recent QAA review was in April 2014 for Specific Course Designation, and this resulted in judgements of confidence in the management of standards, and in management of responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of learning opportunities; and that reliance can be placed on the information produced by LKH. Good practice was noted in relation to student engagement; integration of learning and the use of externally endorsed modules. There were a total of five recommendations, two advisory in relation to committee reporting lines and analysis of student data, and three desirable, covering the development of a learning and teaching strategy, increases in staff engagement with the Quality Code, and a review of student engagement arrangements.

A subsequent monitoring visit in 2016 concluded that LKH had made acceptable progress in the implementation of these prior recommendations. The current review has reflected that LKH has continued to seek to address the points made, and to build upon the identified areas of good practice.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

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

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (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   LKH does not have degree awarding powers. The University of Manchester is the degree-awarding body with overall responsibility for ensuring that the learning outcomes within the awards reflect appropriate external reference points, including the FHEQ. The University, by way of the Collaborative Academic Adviser, seeks assurance that LKH complies with external reference points and its responsibilities for the maintenance of threshold academic standards.

1.2   The University additionally uses validation procedures and institutional reviews for monitoring alignment with external threshold standards. LKH develops programmes in accordance with the frameworks and regulations set out by the University, and has chosen to concentrate its taught programmes in the field of Contextual Theology, which allows for specialisation. Programmes are prepared with input from partner colleges and proposals for approval submitted to the University's Academic Panel. The arrangements in place for the maintenance of threshold academic standards of awards would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3   The review team examined documentary evidence relating to LKH's collaborative agreement with the University, its governance arrangements and procedures for programme approvals. The team also met senior managers, and academic and professional staff, as well as the Collaborative Academic Adviser, who acts as the University representative on LKH committees.

1.4   The review team found clear evidence that LKH is ensuring the maintenance of academic standards, and that the long-term partnership with the University is effective. External examiner reports show that LKH discharges its responsibilities to the appropriate level of the FHEQ, by explicitly referring to engagement with learning outcomes and levels reached by students. The team also examined evidence that showed that programme specifications and module outlines align with the FHEQ, through Subject Benchmark Statements and the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

1.5   LKH demonstrates alignment with UK threshold standards, and the productive collaboration between LKH and the University of Manchester ensures that these standards are maintained. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.6   LKH is required to adhere to the academic framework and regulations set out by the University of Manchester. Guidance on the application of the framework and regulations is contained in the Collaborative Agreement and is monitored through arrangements with the University. Assessment regulations at LKH conform to University regulations with credit and qualifications governed by the Examination Board.

1.7   LKH has recently reviewed its committee structure and steps have been taken to ensure that the Board of Trustees better fulfils its responsibility for the institutional oversight of academic standards. The day-to-day management of academic quality is the responsibility of the Research and Programme Committees, which relevant programme leaders and all academic staff are invited to attend. The Research and Programme Committees take responsibility for reviewing, developing and internally approving programme changes prior to submission to the University's Academic Panel for approval. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.8   The review team examined documentation including the minutes of the LKH Board of Trustees, committees and Examination Boards. The team also discussed academic standards with college Principals, Trustees, the LKH President and the Collaborative Academic Adviser from the University.

1.9   There is clear evidence of LKH and the University working collaboratively to ensure that academic standards are maintained. The role of the Collaborative Academic Adviser provides an established link and represents the University at Examination Boards. Reports by the Collaborative Academic Adviser and external examiners show that the process is working well and that relationships are strong. Additionally, effective processes are in place to ensure that LKH remains up to date with regulatory adjustments and modifications.

1.10   The review team found that LKH is effective in adhering to University regulations through its committee structure. Although this structure was recently revised, staff interviewed by the team understood their responsibilities within it.

1.11   LKH works effectively with its awarding body, and the committee structure is functioning appropriately to ensure compliance with the academic framework and regulations set out by the University of Manchester. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.12   Programme and module specifications and module unit descriptors are developed by LKH using University of Manchester templates. They are considered at Programme Committees before being submitted to the University for approval. Programme specifications and module descriptors provided make explicit reference to the FHEQ, and Subject Benchmark Statements, and an equivalent process is in place for amendments to programmes. Specifications are made available to students through programme handbooks, which are distributed via the virtual learning environment (VLE).

1.13   These processes would allow the Expectation to be met, as definitive records of programmes are maintained and made available to students.

1.14   The review team assessed LKH's approach to meeting this Expectation through reviewing documentation including programme specifications and meeting relevant staff, including programme leads.

1.15   The programme specifications prepared by LKH has been approved by the University, and the review team found that students demonstrated awareness of learning outcomes, and where to locate them. Programme handbooks contain comprehensive information, and the programme specifications and module descriptors seen by the team demonstrate explicit alignment with the FHEQ, the UK Qualifications and Credit Framework, and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. LKH maintains detailed records of student results in relation to modules and programmes, and the resultant awards made.

1.16   LKH maintains definitive records of programmes made available to students. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.17 The primary responsibility within LKH for academic standards and quality lies with the BA and MA Programme Committees, with general oversight by the Board of Trustees. The processes for the approval of programmes and modules are specified by the University of Manchester. Relevant standard documentation includes references to UK threshold standards and to the University academic framework and regulations. Programme specifications and module descriptors are developed within LKH, using University templates, with internal consideration taking place at Programme Committees.

1.18 Internal responsibility for support lies primarily with the Registrar. Following internal approval, programme specifications and module descriptors are sent to the University for approval at Academic Panels to ensure that relevant academic framework requirements and regulations are complied with. There is some external input as part of the University procedure. The research degree provision of LKH is conducted entirely within University regulations and specifications. The design of these systems would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.19 The review team reviewed and evaluated a range of programme specifications and module descriptors, and committee minutes, and met a range of staff involved in the development and approval of both programme specifications and module descriptors.

1.20 LKH has a single programme at each of the three (BA, MA and research) levels, with student choice provided by the range of modules at each taught level. Programme specifications and module descriptors show compliance with University regulations and academic framework. They also demonstrably reflect adherence to the FHEQ, the UK Qualifications and Credit Framework, and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The University Collaborative Academic Adviser confirmed that LKH academic staff engagement with the FHEQ and Quality Code was appropriately reflected in documents forwarded to the Academic Panel for approval. Documents tested by the review team also demonstrated engagement with appropriate learning outcomes and confirmed compliance with external standards. The team examined examples of new module descriptors being considered at the Programme Committee, and of the minutes of those Committees being received by the Board.

1.21 In collaboration with the University of Manchester, LKH develops and approves programmes to reflect threshold academic standards, and the academic standards of the University. The review team concludes that 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

1.22   The meeting of UK threshold standards and University of Manchester academic standards is considered as part of programme design, development, approval and assessment processes. Learning outcomes are set out as part of programme specifications, and in module descriptors, and methods of assessment are designed to show how assessment enables a student to demonstrate that learning outcomes have been met. Achievement of learning outcomes is approved by the Programme Committees, and then by the Academic Panel at the University. University regulations and processes ensure that credit and qualifications are only awarded where learning outcomes have been met.

1.23   An external examiner is appointed for each programme by the University, and it is part of the role of the external examiner to ensure that assessments are appropriate for ensuring that threshold standards and academic standards are met.

1.24   The design of these measures would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.25   The review team appraised programme specifications and module descriptors, considered the minutes of relevant committees, and reviewed the reports of external examiners. They also met staff involved in the approval and assessment processes.

1.26   The review team found that learning outcomes were clearly set out in relevant specifications. Staff and students confirmed that learning outcomes were made available to the latter, and were used in the setting and marking of assessments. External examiner reports and Examination Board minutes reviewed by the team confirm that outcomes have been achieved and standards met, and that for all issues raised a robust action plan is put in place and completed. External examiner reports are considered by the LKH Programme Committee. In addition, the Collaborative Academic Adviser reports annually on the conduct of Assessment Boards.

1.27   These arrangements are robust in ensuring that credit is only awarded for the achievement of learning outcomes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is 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

1.28   LKH follows the processes for annual monitoring and periodic review specified by the University of Manchester. An annual report is prepared in relation to each programme and is reviewed by the Programme Committees before submission to the University. The purpose of these reports is to ensure that all relevant academic standards continue to be met, and each report includes an action plan.

1.29   External examiners are also required to comment on the achievement of academic standards, and Periodic Reviews of each programme are scheduled to take place every five to six years, which confirm that relevant academic standards continue to be met. The most recent Institutional Review and Periodic Review took place in 2011, and the next such visits are scheduled for November 2017.

1.30   The designs of the above processes within LKH, supported by the University, would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.31   The review team reviewed documents including those describing responsibilities and approaches to managing the programme and sample annual monitoring reports, and the University responses to these. The team also met staff engaged in this process.

1.32   The review team found that annual monitoring reports are detailed, take account of a range of relevant evidence, including that relating to the meeting of academic standards, and have action plans that are followed up. The team also reviewed documents relating to the 2011 Periodic Review process and confirmed that appropriate follow-up actions were taken to address the recommendations arising. The need to make more thorough use of statistical data on student performance has been identified in the QAA review of 2014 as an advisable action, which is part of the LKH action plan for 2016-17. The team was advised that a schedule is being put in place for a regular pattern of review of data, with information on admission, progression, achievement and satisfaction being received by the Programme Committees and the Board on a regular annual basis; the review team affirmed this action. This is discussed in more detail under Expectation B8.

1.33   While the review team was satisfied that appropriate data was taken into account in annual reviews, the evidence available indicated that it was not dealt with on a systematically explicit basis across the range of committees and other groups. Although the committee structure has recently been revised and reviewed, the review team found that there was a lack of explicit transparency as to where the responsibility for formal data monitoring lay within the LKH committee structure. The review team **recommends** that LKH make more explicit in committee agendas and minutes where decisions are taken and where consideration of data takes place.

1.34   The reviews team concludes that the Expectation is 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

1.35   The University of Manchester is responsible for appointing external examiners who review assessment and marking. External examiner reports are discussed at committee level at LKH and each Programme Leader produces a response that is received by the University Academic Panel.

1.36   LKH has external members with academic backgrounds on the Board of Trustees, who provide independent advice and support. LKH has also chosen to build up collaborative relationships with similar theological institutions in areas of shared interest such as in programme and modular design.

1.37   The LKH processes, working within the University framework, would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.38   The review team examined documentation including minutes from Examination Boards and external examiner reports. The team also discussed the process in meetings with academic management and staff.

1.39   The review team found that LKH is responsive to suggestions and recommendations from external examiner reports, with responses and resulting actions monitored effectively by the University through the Collaborative Academic Adviser and the Academic Panel. This effective collaboration between LKH and the University ensures sufficient external scrutiny, transparency and public accountability.

1.40   LKH is also making good use of additional external sources. The review team found that the independent members of the Board of Trustees were knowledgeable and highly supportive. The use of external expertise at this key oversight body ensures that standards can be monitored by those from outside the institution, and confirms that LKH seeks external input to maintain standards. In addition, the existing partnerships with similar theological institutions are firmly established and being promoted through the University Academic Panel. These partnerships facilitate external input into programme design, providing independent expertise on programme development and design.

1.41   In partnership with the University of Manchester, LKH uses additional independent expertise to ensure that provision is transparent and publicly accountable. 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

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

1.43   All seven Expectations in the judgement area are met, and all of these have a low level of risk. One recommendation was identified, and this relates to LKH making more explicit in committee agendas and minutes where decisions are taken and where consideration of data takes place. There are no features of good practice, and no affirmations in respect of these Expectations.

1.44   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body at LKH **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 The design of LKH programmes follows University of Manchester processes, with all programmes ultimately approved by that University. Programme specifications and modules are developed by programme teams within LKH, using University templates. While modules offered are able to be changed, each programme is designed to be coherent with a core focus on Contextual Theology. Internal consideration takes place at Programme Committees, where students are involved in discussions. Approved programme specifications are sent to the University for approval by an Academic Panel; criteria include the consideration of learning opportunities.

2.2 Responsibility for supporting the development process lies primarily with the Registrar; the University Collaborative Academic Adviser provides feedback. The requirements of constituent colleges are taken into account where relevant, and preparation of new module descriptors follows the same process. The design of these systems would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The review team considered programme specifications and module descriptors, together with papers and minutes of relevant committees. The team also met members of staff who had been involved in programme and module development and approval, and the University Collaborative Academic Adviser.

2.4 As the main provision within LKH is the BA and the MA, and no new programmes have been approved for some years, programme development is primarily carried out through module development. The team found examples of programme specifications, module descriptors and new module development and review of existing modules, which confirmed that the processes for design, development and approval within LKH are effective.

2.5 A new module may arise from a review or be proposed by a college, or in the case of the MA may arise from academic staff research interests. The review team found evidence of module modification with a view to identifying appropriate core and option modules for students at each taught level, and appropriate consideration of resource requirements for each such development. Such review may result in module descriptors being redrafted. Once the need for a new module is identified the relevant Programme Leader is involved in discussions with teams, which understand and acknowledge the significance of developing modules at the appropriate level. The team saw evidence of staff training in relation to programme development, in the form of workshops and away-days, and the engagement of students and constituent colleges in programme development. Externality is built into the process as draft module descriptors are sent to other partner colleges of the University, which deliver similar programmes for comment. New module descriptors are appropriately considered by Programme Committees.

2.6 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.7   In respect of both the BA and the MA programmes, the responsibility for recruitment and selection of students is undertaken by LKH, working within policies and procedures approved and overseen by the University of Manchester. Within this process, the individual colleges have responsibility for recruitment and selection based upon their own denominational priorities, and these may extend over a number of months dependent upon their individual expectations and requirements. The LKH admissions policy provides a standard and consistent baseline for these arrangements.

2.8   The PhD research programme admissions policy is a collaborative process, as LKH makes a recommendation for admission based upon a similar recruitment process, but for these students the final decision lies with the University itself.

2.9   Documentation and information relating to admissions is available on the website, and reflects the admissions policies and procedures within LKH. All applicants are invited for an interview unless there is clear evidence from their application that criteria cannot be met. Interviews can be effected in person, or online, usually involving two members of staff, and also may entail a written test where it is appropriate to do so.

2.10   The admissions process is subject to continuous review, and has been considered and appraised at meetings of college Principals, and by the Board. In this regard, there is an established delineation of responsibilities relating to admissions, supported by standard processes and documentation, which would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.11   The review team analysed a range of evidence relating to the admissions process, including information provided to prospective students. The team also met staff responsible for admissions and with a sample of students who had been interviewed at different colleges.

2.12   Documentation and information relating to admissions is available on the LKH website and seeks to appropriately embody the principles of fairness and transparency at all stages. The commitment of LKH to diversity expressed in its 'access and participation' statement is fully reflected in its admissions policies and procedures. This encompasses, in particular for the BA, both standard and non-standard entry routes to reflect the profile of those applying. Students confirmed that LKH had developed and strengthened its admissions process in recent years and commented that the arrangements now in place were helpful, especially in allowing prospective candidates to reflect on their application through personal statements. The meeting with students confirmed the supportive nature of the process, and the open and welcoming ethos demonstrated by staff was particularly welcomed, along with the comprehensive range of information provided. The level of information provided on the website was felt to be effective, especially when augmented by the opportunities for students to speak to key staff during the admissions process.

2.13   Staff who met the review team confirmed that LKH's overall approach to recruitment was inclusive, with a focus on providing opportunities for individuals with the potential to

succeed in their chosen course of study through engagement with the overall targeted support offered. Staff were aware of, and involved in, managerial oversight and review of student admission data, and noted the specific focus on data involving gender, ethnicity and standard or non-standard application types. This collectively aims to provide assurance that the principles of equality and diversity are explicitly achieved.

2.14   This analysis has highlighted that some students find studying at this level particularly challenging and may indeed prove unable to complete their courses, whether due to a lack of study skills, or insufficient fluency where English is an additional language. Robust processes have been put in place as a result; the review team **affirms** the steps being taken to strengthen admissions criteria in relation to English language and study skills.

2.15   There are clearly defined procedures in place for the recruitment, selection and admission of students and current students comment positively on the effectiveness of the process. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met with 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

2.16   LKH has a Learning and Teaching Strategy generic to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, which outlines the direction of academic delivery. The approach within this Strategy is to be flexible in delivery to satisfy the requirements of a student body, most of whom are practising in the community while studying. The approach has led LKH towards an interest in the development of online resources. The VLE is being developed along with ideas on how to apply a blended learning approach to the delivery of the curriculum.

2.17   Academic staff must be approved by the University of Manchester prior to teaching at LKH, and the majority of such staff have doctorates. All staff are expected to be research active and also expected to have been engaged in church ministry. Though teaching qualifications are not compulsory, academic staff are involved in pedagogic training activities and peer observations of teaching. The line management of academic staff functions through the relevant constituent colleges, and all staff are subject to an annual appraisal by their line manager, through which professional development activities are discussed. Students complete module evaluation forms, which contribute to detailed data being collected by LKH for the purpose of reviewing provision.

2.18   The above approach set out by LKH would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.19   The review team tested the Expectation by examining documentation and holding discussions with students and staff to highlight the students' learning experience and staff development opportunities.

2.20   The review team found that LKH has processes in place to support the development of academic staff, and discussions with staff and documented CVs show that LKH is providing a variety of opportunities for staff development with funding available for further professional development. In addition to peer reviews, away days and three internal training days annually, academic staff are able to attend training opportunities provided by the University.

2.21   Students were generally very complimentary about the quality of academic staff, and confirmed that they use a wide range of teaching and learning methods. Students spoke highly of the practical experience that staff brought into the teaching and learning process. The results of module evaluation forms, and the student submission to this report, reflects this high level of student satisfaction, although there was evidence of some variation in satisfaction across modules. Further discussion with students and staff identified aspects of curriculum delivery by part-time staff, for whom support systems have been devised and put in place.

2.22   The review team saw evidence of detailed data on performance and student module evaluations, and these are being processed at committee level to ensure effective teaching and learning. Data from module evaluation forms is analysed by the relevant Programme Leaders, with trends highlighted at Programme Committee. Staff are also able

to view the data to support their development. However, due to the complexity of the management structure which crosses over the constituent colleges, the academic appraisal process is inconsistently applied and does not systematically incorporate consideration of relevant and appropriate data into the process. The review team **recommends** that LKH strengthen the academic staff appraisal process to include student feedback and performance data.

2.23   LKH has effective arrangements and practices established to support staff and ensure quality learning opportunities. 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

2.24   LKH approaches student development and achievement from the perspective of providing academic, personal and professional support, based upon a multi-denominational approach to learning that emphasises the relationship between theory and practice. Placements across different denominations provide the practice, while LKH concentrates on providing a high level of contact time between staff and students, including a system of pastoral tutorials and a culture of offering additional support tutorials on demand. LKH adopts an inclusive approach, with a student cohort that is multicultural. A named Disability Adviser is trained to provide practical help for those with disabilities.

2.25   Students receive handbooks and have access to a specialised Resource Centre on campus with access to materials on the VLE and at the University of Manchester, although only research students have full access to the latter resources. The Learning Resource Tutor is active within the Management Committee, which enables strategic planning of resources. Additionally, student feedback on suitability of resources is covered through the module evaluation forms. These existing governance and support structures would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.26   The review team tested the Expectation by examining documentary evidence, including programme handbooks and minutes of committee meetings. In addition, meetings were held with staff and students to triangulate the documentary evidence

2.27   The review team found that the process for providing resources and support for students is working effectively in practice. Students confirmed that resources available are being utilised, including those at the University. In addition, LKH has ensured that Open College students, who are without the specific pastoral arrangements organised by the constituent colleges, receive extra tutorial support. Open College students spoke well of the type of support that they were receiving and felt integrated within the wider student community. Students additionally stressed that staff are accessible and approachable and that they are able to book tutor sessions as required.

2.28   The review team recognised that LKH values the creation of a multi-denominational environment. The growth of, and support provided to, the Open College highlights an ethos in which students from denominations that are independent of the constituent colleges are accepted into LKH. Students and staff highlighted that the multi-denominational environment widens the learning experience and allows a cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices. The strong collaborative ethos leading to a multi-denominational environment that enriches the student learning experience is **good practice**.

2.29   Learning opportunities are supported by detailed student handbooks and access to appropriate resources. The inclusive approach brings challenges to LKH because of the resulting diversity across the student cohort. The review team nevertheless recognised that LKH is responsive to diverse needs, such as through providing support in study skills including avoiding plagiarism, language support for non-native speakers of English and individualised support for dyslexic students. Students confirmed that tutors recommend additional support where necessary, for example through assessment feedback, although the uptake is not compulsory. Overall, students felt that LKH was adapting its pedagogic practice to suit a variety of learning styles and they appreciated a style of education that

catered for their needs at a spiritual, emotional and cognitive level. The focused learning support, which meets the needs of a diverse student body, is **good practice**.

2.30   LKH has established structures and an ethos to support a diverse range of students. 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

2.31   LKH has student engagement at all levels, including an elected president of the student body, who sits on the Board of Trustees as an invitee, and student representatives, who are members of relevant committees. Additionally, there is a 'Senior Student' for each individual college, who speaks on behalf of the student body at their college regarding non-academic matters. Student representatives and Senior Students have regular one-to-one meetings with Principals of constituent colleges. LKH has also introduced a Moodle discussion space for students to use in order to facilitate discussion as an outcome of the most recent review report.

2.32   The design of the process, which allows students to engage as partners, would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.33   In evaluating the approach to meeting the Expectation the review team considered a range of evidence, including relevant minutes, and met staff and students, including representatives, and the President of the student body.

2.34   In practice, the use of student feedback data to inform institutional level conversations is still a relatively new development, and for the first time this year the feedback provided by students on their modules is now collated into a single file for analysis. This is reviewed by the Programme Committee and there is evidence of changes that have been made as a result of student feedback. In addition, staff review qualitative and quantitative feedback from module evaluations of the courses they teach, and their analysis is subject to oversight by senior staff. The VLE discussion area for students to post issues with their course is relatively new, although the review team found that students were fully aware of, and used, this facility.

2.35   The review team also found that LKH used student representatives to inform the direction of specific projects. LKH has an open-door policy that had been used by several of the students met by the review team. There is a particularly flexible targeted and timely approach to the needs and availability of the MA student representatives, who are invited to working lunch meetings to discuss relevant matters.

2.36   Nevertheless, there are aspects of the student representation system that still need further development. The review team noted that while there are three student representatives on the BA Programme Committee and one on the MA Programme Committee, there is no equivalent representation on the Research Programme Committee. Furthermore, the need for student representation on the Board of Trustees was raised in the last two QAA reviews, and this has only been partially addressed by the inclusion of a student president as an invitee rather than as a full member.

2.37   Many students are mature and may come to the role with experience of working in a committee environment. Nevertheless, the specific responsibilities of the student representative role can be materially different and all students would benefit from training to help support their effectiveness. This is partially addressed at present by the provision of terms of reference and guidelines in this respect.

2.38   Feedback from student representatives to the cohort as a whole was identified as only being partially effective. Not all students met by the review team were able to identify

their student representative; some stated that they did not always get feedback on suggestions and proposals they put forward and were thus unable to identify a change resulting from their comments. Although LKH has cited instances where student feedback has led to change, it is evident that this process still needs further development. The review team **recommends** that LKH strengthen student representation, improve training for representatives and further develop the processes for closing the feedback loop.

2.39   LKH's current systems for student representation and engagement are generally effective, and there are formal and informal processes in place for gathering student feedback, which in turn inform decisions taken by LKH. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.40   Assessment regulations are set by the University of Manchester. LKH is responsible for the assessment process, including setting, marking and moderation, subject to University oversight. Learning outcomes are provided in programme specifications and module unit descriptors, and modules include formative and summative assessment. Assessments are approved in advance by the external examiner, who also appraises a range of student work. Assessment work is submitted via the VLE, and all work is marked and moderated with feedback provided. Study skills sessions are available to assist students in gaining skills relevant to assessment, and processes are in place to deal with mitigating circumstances.

2.41   Examination Boards are chaired by the President and are held in line with University regulations, and a representative of the University is required to attend, together with the external examiner for the relevant programme. The University representation is usually the Collaborative Academic Adviser and the Collaborative Partnership Administrative Officer. Pre-Board meetings take place to check documentation.

2.42   Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning/Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is set by the University. Information is made available by LKH as part of the admissions process and support can be provided in making an application. Any applications for APEL are formally considered by the relevant Programme Committee and passed on to the University, although the nature of the student cohort means that such applications are rare. The arrangements identified above would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.43   The review team tested the Expectation by examining a range of documents, including the Checklist of Responsibilities, and minutes and papers from assessment monitoring meetings. In addition, meetings were conducted with students and staff to establish how these mechanisms work in practice.

2.44   The review team found that information relevant to assessment is made available to students in programme handbooks. Help is offered to ensure University regulations are understood by students and marking criteria are made available. Staff whom the team met noted that due to the diverse student intake, support for study skills included advice and support relevant to assessment, for example in relation to paraphrasing and avoidance of plagiarism. There is also support for students for whom English is not a first language. Students confirmed that they are familiar with learning outcomes, standards and assessment, although individuals felt that more guidance on essay form and marking, and greater creativity in the setting of assignments, may support the process further. Students were very positive about the support available to them in relation to assessment, while noting that not all of their peers made full use of it. Comments from students such as these had led to developments in guidance to support assessment being put in place.

2.45   Staff confirmed that there are regular training sessions for them in relation to assessment and all marking is moderated with forms recording comments. The review team saw Examination Board minutes showing appropriate operation of the Boards, and attendance by the external examiner and the University representative. The latter

representative confirmed to the review team the appropriateness of the operation of Examination Boards. Data on student progression and completion is collated, and this is considered at relevant meetings such as staff away days, although LKH recognise that this development needs to be further embedded. External examiners are supportive of the effectiveness of the process and standards relating to assessment, and where they raise any issues there is assurance that action is taken. For example, comments on consistency in marking and separate criteria for presentations were discussed at Programme Committee meetings and have been picked up as part of the action plan for 2016-17. Other actions to improve processes have been identified and taken, including ensuring the policy on extensions is clear and fair. Staff met by the review team said that a wider variety of assessment methods is being considered, and there has been training in relation to this.

2.46   There are robust assessment processes in place, with actions identified and taken as necessary. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is 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

2.47   The University of Manchester appoints external examiners, typically following a recommendation from LKH, and takes responsibility for their induction. One external examiner is appointed for the BA programme, one for the MA programme and individual examiners for each research degree. LKH informs students about the role of external examiners through the programme handbooks, which are also available on the VLE. External examiners write reports that conform to a detailed University template; these are processed through the committee structure, with the relevant Programme Leader writing a formal response. Responses are received by the University's Academic Panel, which oversees the process.

2.48   The design of processes in place requires the appointment of external examiners, consideration of external examiner reports and response to actions, and these frameworks and processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.49   The review team reviewed evidence relating to external examiners, including reports, and minutes of committee meetings and Examination Boards. The effectiveness of annual monitoring arrangements was discussed in meetings with LKH management and University representatives.

2.50   The review team found that external examiners' reports are positive and that LKH is responsive to issues that are highlighted by external examiners. Programme Leaders are processing external examiners' reports effectively and communicating issues across teams. Student representation at Programme Committees also allows the student cohort a direct voice when considering reports and responses. The resulting level of responsiveness is evidenced in action plans and was also backed up by the University representative during the review visit. Additional evidence shows that issues arising from external examiner reports are being actively followed up by the University through the Collaborative Academic Adviser and at the Academic Panel to ensure that the voices of all external examiners are heard.

2.51   LKH is responsive to issues raised by external examiners. 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

2.52   LKH is required to follow the annual monitoring and periodic review processes set by the University of Manchester, which focus on standards and student experience, and LKH regards review as part of normal processes. The annual monitoring reports for taught programmes are prepared by Programme Leaders and the President, in light of discussions at Programme Committees, which are attended by students, and staff away days. External examiner reports, student feedback and student progression data are considered as part of the evidence base. Action points and progress on actions identified in the previous year are seen as an important element of the process, and rolling action plans go to the Programme Committees. The reports are passed to the University Collaborative Academic Adviser, who in turn incorporates the outcomes into annual reports prepared for the University. Formal annual monitoring is supported by internal monitoring processes, for example by the LKH Board, and meetings of college Principals.

2.53   The last institutional and periodic review took place in 2011 and the next one is taking place in autumn 2017. Review may take place independent of formal processes, with a review of the BA programme, including external input, being initiated in 2014, partly as a result of module feedback. LKH is also subject to review by its sponsoring denominations, the most recent one being in 2012. Community Work modules have been endorsed by the English Standards Board for Community Development Work Training and Qualifications.

2.54   The formal arrangements in place are focused on the annual monitoring review process and the periodic reviews. This design would allow the Expectation to be met

2.55   The review team considered LKH's approach to programme monitoring and review through documents outlining responsibilities, reviewing examples of annual and periodic monitoring reports. In addition, processes in place were discussed with staff responsible for arranging monitoring and review practices, students, and the University representative.

2.56   The review team established that annual monitoring reports were thorough, with each report covering a range of aspects of the provision, and, where applicable, included action points with checks made that actions were followed up. The team identified examples of developments made as a result of annual monitoring, and also as a result of staff away days where changes to modules, forms of delivery and online support were discussed. Students felt able to shape and influence the life of LKH.

2.57   The review team discussed the steps being taken to develop fuller use of detailed data, including matters such as comparing module results and the consideration of module scores by Programme Committees from this year. The Collaborative Academic Adviser reports provide an additional oversight of matters relevant to student experience and confirm that annual monitoring processes are robust. The team noted that a more systematic pattern is being put in place for a regular review of data on admission, progression, achievement and satisfaction by Programme Committees and the Board. The review team **affirms** the move to a regular and consistent schedule for the consideration of data by committees at relevant points in the academic year.

2.58   The Institutional and Periodic Review in 2011 resulted in an action plan, which was

followed up. The review team discussed preparatory work for the forthcoming Periodic Review and Institutional Review, but noted that this was in its early stages.

2.59   Review and monitoring processes are in place and are working effectively. 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

2.60   LKH has established policies and procedures for handling student complaints and academic appeals, in partnership with the University of Manchester, and these feature within the programme handbooks and on the VLE. Prior to any formal processes being invoked, LKH gives opportunities for such matters to be resolved informally by ongoing liaison with, and ready access to, LKH staff.

2.61   These processes have been agreed with the University, as in relevant cases a student has the right to appeal beyond LKH to the University, and thereafter if necessary to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Complaints and academic appeals are the responsibility of LKH and dealt with directly, although the nature of its structure, involving the constituent colleges, does mean that some complaints are dealt with at this devolved level. Taken together, these policies and processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.62   The review team reviewed the procedures in place for appeals and complaints, including the guidance provided to students about the processes they should follow. The team also met students and staff and discussed complaints and appeals with them.

2.63   Staff and students confirmed the processes in place for both informal and formal complaints and appeals. These processes for addressing informal complaints work effectively, and students are satisfied with the way in which they are managed. Although none of the students met had been involved in any formal appeals or complaints, they were all aware of the policy for both and were clear on the roles and processes involved.

2.64   All complaints and academic appeals are periodically reviewed as part of the annual monitoring process by the Programme Committee, and it is noted that no formal complaints or appeals have been made in the last five years.

2.65   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

2.66   LKH is not a degree-awarding body, so the University of Manchester takes ultimate responsibility for academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. In addition, although student placements are viewed by LKH as providing a valuable opportunity for students to link academic learning to practical experience, specific placements are unrelated to learning outcomes and LKH does not take responsibility for placing students in a work context. Instead, most placements are organised through the relevant constituent college and involve local church, community and voluntary work. These relationships and expectations are outlined in the student handbooks and communicated to students in advance of starting the course.

2.67   LKH does have consultative arrangements with similar theological institutions and these are used to provide feedback on draft programme development. These arrangements provide a process of additional external input and are promoted by the University through its Academic Panel. Taken together, these arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.68   The review team tested the Expectation by considering evidence including the Memorandum of Cooperation with the University, and in meeting staff and students.

2.69   Although without formal arrangements to deliver programmes with other organisations, the review team found LKH to be working closely with similar theological institutions and actively supporting students in their placements. Students who met the review team were positive about the way that their programme at LKH promotes reflection of these experiences. In meetings, students confirmed that they were in placements, with many placed in challenging situations that they will encounter in future work. Students commented positively on the usefulness of placements and were complimentary about the close support provided by LKH tutors experienced in the field.

2.70   LKH is collaborating effectively with other theological institutions, in particular through the reviewing of each other's draft documentation. As a small institution, LKH has built up strong joint-working arrangements with similar theological institutions. LKH staff confirmed that these partnerships provided an opportunity to share good practice as well as support each other in programme developments. The University's Academic Panel provides a stable forum through which this collaboration can develop.

2.71   The arrangements for student placements and the collaborative engagement with constituent colleges support the student learning opportunities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.72   LKH offers two research degrees: a PhD and an MPhil, both in Contextual Theology. Research students are registered at both LKH and the University of Manchester, and processed in accordance with University policy. LKH recommends students for admission, subject to approval by the University, and proposes supervision and assessment arrangements on a similar basis. The Research Programme Committee oversees the research activity, and an annual monitoring report is prepared by LKH for the University.

2.73   LKH works closely with the degree awarding body and has processes in place that would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.74   The review team tested the Expectation by analysing relevant documentation including handbooks and committee minutes. The team also met research students, programme leaders, and representatives from the University.

2.75   Students confirmed to the review team that if they wish to undertake a research degree they submit an initial enquiry, which is considered by the Research Programme Committee. If students are appropriately qualified and interested in an area that LKH can support, they are assigned an academic adviser who fully supports the student to submit a research proposal to the University. The review team found that students have full access to LKH resources and training opportunities during this period. Students' progress is monitored by the Research Programme Committee and reported to the University. There is a comprehensive postgraduate handbook, which sets out the regulatory framework, effectively supporting research degrees at LKH.

2.76   The review team noted that students were positive about their experience as research students, especially in the context of allocated supervisors, who were readily accessible, and had knowledge on a range of theoretical perspectives and practice-based experience. Although registered at both LKH and the University, research students met by the team stated that there was clarity regarding supervision arrangements.

2.77   LKH offers several residential Research Training Days throughout the year to explore skills, such as preparing for a viva or on the use of electronic resources. Students are able to access relevant training and library resources at the University. Candidates are encouraged to present their work to other students at LKH and several have presented their work externally. LKH has proactively developed its own form for ethics approval, as the University does not have one tailored for Theology. Students met by the team felt that they were part of a research active environment and that they had access to the resources they needed.

2.78   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.79   In reaching its judgement about the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.80   There are 11 Expectations in this judgement area and all of these are met with a low risk of associated risk. There are two recommendations in this area. In respect of Expectation B3, the review team identified a need to strengthen the academic staff appraisal process to include student feedback and performance data. For Expectation B5, it was recommended that LKH should strengthen student representation, improve training for representatives and further develop the processes for closing the feedback loop.

2.81   The move to a regular and consistent schedule for the consideration of data by committees at relevant points in the academic year under Expectation B8 was affirmed by the review team. An affirmation was also made in relation to Expectation B2, and the steps taken to strengthen admissions criteria in relation to English language and study skills.

2.82   There were also two specific features of good practice identified in relation to Expectation B4, involving respectively the strong collaborative ethos leading to a multi-denominational environment that enriches the student learning experience; and the focused learning support, which meets the needs of a diverse student body.

2.83   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at LKH **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 LKH provides information about its provision for a wide range of audiences including the public, and current and prospective students. Its website contains information about entry requirements, modules, the application process, learning resources, fees and its partnership with the University of Manchester. LKH has primary responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of information, while the University has final approval of all publicity information. The main source of information for current students is the VLE and programme handbooks.

3.2 The design of the processes would enable the Expectation to be met, as LKH delineates responsibility in relation to published information both internally and with the University.

3.3 The review team reviewed the information provided to prospective and current students by the website, VLE and related documentation. The team also met staff responsible for the production of information about LKH, and spoke with students about their experience of the information they received.

3.4 The range of information on LKH's website is comprehensive and the usefulness of the website was acknowledged by students. While its constituent colleges also have websites, all academic information is located within the LKH website. There is a clear process in place whereby the LKH Registry checks the main and constituent college websites to ensure consistency of information.

3.5 LKH programme handbooks are comprehensive, being developed by programme teams and approved by the LKH President before being submitted to the University for authorisation. Each college also produces handbooks containing non-academic policies, as well as information pertaining to life at the college. Ultimate responsibility within LKH for the accuracy of information produced lies with the President and is operationally devolved to the Registry. Strategic oversight of the information process is maintained by the Management Committee, which receives periodic assurance as to the effective operation of these arrangements.

3.6 Students are kept informed about developments through the VLE. Additionally, there is a weekly group worship session that provides further opportunity for announcements to be made to the entire student body. Student representatives are able to email the entire student body in liaison with the Registry. In meetings with the review team, students were complimentary about the quality of information at LKH.

3.7 Processes within LKH ensure that the information produced on its higher education is effective, fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.8   In reaching its judgements about the quality of the information about student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.9   The one Expectation in this judgement area is met, with a low level of risk. There were no recommendations or affirmations in relation to this Expectation, and no instances of good practice were highlighted.

3.10   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at LKH **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   LKH characterises itself as pioneering new patterns of learning for students preparing for Christian ministry, in particular as regards the contextual approach. It fully accepts the need for change and development in the current environment, and as a result has carried a full review of its activities with a view to developing an action plan - the report 'Future Life of LKH' was approved by the Board in 2017. There is acceptance at Board level that more systematic oversight of educational goals, direction and implementation would be valuable, and this has led to the development of a Learning and Teaching Strategy.

4.2   Below this level, LKH has not developed a specific definition or strategy in relation to enhancement, but sees enhancement as an inherent part of processes like annual review, where needs for action are identified and incorporated into action plans. The design would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3   To test the effectiveness of its processes, the review team reviewed the student submission, committee structure and minutes, staff appraisal and development practices, and annual monitoring review and action planning approaches. The team met students, senior managers, and academic and professional support staff to discuss work in practice.

4.4   The Board discusses and oversees strategic development. The review team identified that significant work had gone into developing the 'Future Life of LKH', with discussion at a range of Board meetings seeking to articulate a vision. The document focuses on financial and structural security, seeking to maintain strengths, while acknowledging the need to address weaknesses in the current structure and including recommendations. Board and management-level commitment to enhancement initiatives could also be seen in developments such as the Open College to support students who are not training for ministry with a particular denomination.

4.5   A number of enhancement activities take place each year, primarily as part of annual monitoring and action planning, which is discussed by Programme Committees. The review team heard from students that their feedback leads to changes in modules, information on assessment, and improvements in student experience.

4.6   While the review team found a generally positive approach to enhancement, the overall arrangements for the identification and spreading of good practice were not always clearly articulated and systematic. Although the Learning and Teaching Strategy was approved by Programme Committees in February 2016 and considered by the Board, it is not a very detailed document, and the team understood that there is not yet an implementation plan in place. Staff noted that some specific steps were being taken, such as the piloting of an e-learning module, but students said that while teaching was generally good there were some variations in the quality of delivery. To ensure specific steps, actions and timeframes are in place, the review team **recommends** that LKH develop an implementation plan for the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

4.7   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low, even though the approach to enhancement is not fully articulated.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.9   The review team did not identify any good practice or affirmations in relation to this Expectation.

4.10   There was a single recommendation made by the review team, which related to the development of an implementation plan for the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

4.11   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at LKH **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.

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

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

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

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

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.