



Nelson College London Ltd

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

November 2013

Key findings about Nelson College London Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in November 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of Pearson.

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

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

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

- the high level of engagement by staff with the Quality Code (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.3)
- the effectiveness of the student representation system (paragraph 2.6)
- the detailed, well structured and supportive study manuals (paragraph 3.2)
- the effective communication with students using the student newsletter (paragraph 3.2).

Recommendations

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

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

- ensure procedures are in place to combat plagiarism successfully (paragraph 1.6)
- reduce the amount of student work not submitted on time (paragraph 2.7).

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

- develop the committee structure at programme level (paragraph 1.2)
- monitor progress on improving feedback on assessment (paragraph 1.5)
- continue to develop the effectiveness of the observation of teaching schemes (paragraph 2.5)
- continue to develop procedures for checking information about learning opportunities (paragraph 3.4).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Nelson College London (the College) which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Pearson. The review was carried out by Dr Tommie Anderson-Jaquest, Ms Ann Kettle, Mr Andy Lancaster (reviewers) and Dr Peter Steer (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the College, meetings with staff and a separate meeting with students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

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

The College was founded in 2009 as an independent college of higher education specialising in business management. The College's mission is 'widening access to higher education to people from a wide range of backgrounds, transforming lives through knowledge and skills to enable them to prosper in their career'. Originally the College offered its programmes only to non-EU students. However, from September 2012 it started offering them to UK and EU students. These students may be eligible for UK public funding. All students study full-time. There are two campuses at Ilford and Wembley. The Ilford campus comprises two buildings a short distance apart, while the Wembley campus is situated on one site. At Wembley, the College occupies three floors of a large building. At Ilford it has exclusive use of one building and has five floors in its other building, none of which are occupied exclusively.

The Senior Management Committee is the governing body of the College and oversees all of its operations. Its members are appointed by the shareholders. The Academic Committee is the principal body overseeing all academic decisions with subcommittees representing staff and students reporting to it. The Principal, who has overall responsibility for the academic operation of the provision, reports to the Director. Both of them are on the Senior Management Committee. The College has an Acting Principal until a permanent appointment can be made. In November 2013 the College had 1,453 students spread over two intakes per year and offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath the awarding organisation with the number of students in brackets:

Pearson

- HND Business (Ilford Campus 879)
- HND Business (Wembley Campus 371)
- HND Hospitality Management (Wembley Campus, 203).

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight

² www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

The College's stated responsibilities

The College has the responsibility for recruitment and admissions, and also for the provision of resources, teaching and student support to deliver the awards. It undertakes the setting, marking and moderation of assessments and the provision of feedback to students. Pearson appoints external examiners to oversee the delivery of its awards.

Recent developments

The number of students has increased substantially since the December 2012 review report from 331 to 1453 in September 2013. Substantial growth in student numbers has occurred at both campuses with the number of students at Wembley rising from 131 to 574 and Ilford responsible for the rest of the increase. To accommodate the extra students, resources have been increased. For example, the College has obtained extra space on both the Ilford and Wembley campuses. Recently, the College has stopped recruiting non-EU students.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team and did so in October 2013. The College invited student representatives to give their views about the provision in the areas covered by the self-evaluation. These views were brought together with the help of College staff and this document formed the submission which was agreed by the student representatives who had provided the feedback. Students met the review Coordinator at the preparatory meeting and with the team. Their involvement was helpful for the team and provided an insight into a number of topics including student representation and the value of the virtual learning environment (VLE).

Detailed findings about Nelson College London

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has a clear organisational structure that allows it to meet the requirements of its awarding organisation. The Acting Principal is responsible for the academic and administrative functions of the College and reports to the Director. The Head of Academic Services manages the delivery of the provision and reports to the Acting Principal. Academic Managers act as programme leaders for the HND Business, one for each campus, with another responsible for HND Hospitality Management. They report to the Head of Academic Services. The Head of Quality Assurance, currently the Acting Principal, is responsible for the monitoring the quality of provision and the management of all the teaching staff. All the teaching staff are part-time, although the College is currently appointing a number of full-time academic staff. An example of effective management is the implementation of changes to admissions procedures in order to control student numbers in the future.

1.2 The College has increased the effectiveness of its committees, although there is scope for further improvement. The December 2012 review report considered it desirable for the College to review the effectiveness of its committee structure to ensure differentiation in roles and responsibilities. The College has revised the terms of reference and composition of its committees to differentiate between them and make reporting lines clearer. The Senior Management Committee is the College's governing body. It is chaired by the Acting Principal and is responsible for determining the strategic direction of the College. Reporting to Senior Management Committee, the Academic Committee has responsibility for matters relating to the operational delivery of the provision. The Internal Verification Committee is responsible for establishing quality assurance systems to meet external requirements and overseeing assessment processes. Each campus has a Student Representatives Committee which combine some of the functions of programme committees and staff/student liaison committees. In addition, there are minuted meetings of teaching staff on each campus at the start of the session. However, there are no committees that are focused solely on management of the programmes, which, in the case of HND Business, is delivered on two campuses. There are sufficient teaching staff to form module and programme teams as a result of the growth in student numbers. It would be **desirable** for the College to develop the committee structure at programme level.

How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.3 The College engages effectively with external reference points in the management of academic standards. It is reliant on Pearson for the design of its programmes and their alignment with the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the related aspects of the Quality Code. The College has shown a commitment to engage with the Quality Code. For example, the Governance Manual and the Quality Assurance Manual have been substantially revised recently to incorporate the advice in the relevant chapters of the Quality Code. Policies on student complaints and appeals, assessment and feedback have been mapped against the Quality Code and revised. The College has produced a brief manual outlining the expectations of the Quality Code and provided training for both staff and students. The presence of two external members with expertise of higher education on the Senior Management Committee illustrates alignment with *Part A: Setting and maintaining*

threshold academic standards, Chapter A5: Externality. The high level of engagement by staff with the Quality Code is **good practice**.

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

1.4 The College uses external verification effectively to assure academic standards. The December 2012 review report advised the College to standardise and fully implement the internal verification process. In response, the College has redesigned the forms for all stages of the process from the internal verification of assignment briefs to the sampling of marked scripts to verify assessment decisions. In addition, an audit has been introduced to ensure that College guidance on internal verification has been observed. External examiners' reports and the College documentation confirm the effectiveness of internal verification.

1.5 The College responds to external examiners' reports promptly and addresses any concerns raised in them with action plans. For example, recent external examiner comments indicate that the written feedback given to students was often limited and brief with little signposting to further improvements or achieving higher grades. In response, the College has trained staff on providing feedback; produced a Guide for Assessors on providing feedback to students on assessment; and introduced payment for marking assignments based on the quality of feedback. It would be **desirable** for the College to monitor progress on improving feedback on assessment.

1.6 External examiners have indicated a need to place more focus on challenging plagiarism. This includes ensuring that students acknowledge their sources, systematically reference their work and provide comprehensive bibliographies. Examination of student work by the team confirmed that assessors and verifiers had identified suspected plagiarism and copying. In response to the recommendations of external examiners, the College has raised awareness of the nature of plagiarism and provided guidance on referencing in the Student Handbook, during induction and in classes. Some staff expressed scepticism about the need for anti-plagiarism software. However, the College intends to invest in such software once it is compatible with the VLE on both campuses. It is **advisable** for the College to ensure procedures are in place to combat plagiarism successfully.

The review team has **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of its awarding organisation.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The College meets its obligations to its awarding partners concerning learning opportunities. The procedures described in paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.5 are also relevant to learning opportunities.

2.2 Annual reporting provides a suitable overview of the provision including the use of appropriate amounts of data. The December 2012 review report recommended the further development of the College's evaluation and use of management information in the annual monitoring process. In response, the College has designed new templates requiring the use of a range of management information data for its review and enhancement processes.

The most recent annual programme monitoring reports contain useful analysis of a range of data on such matters as student enrolment, retention and assessment performance as well as other factors affecting the provision.

How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?

2.3 The College makes effective use of external reference points in guiding its decisions on managing the quality of student learning opportunities. Several of the features described in paragraph 1.3, such as guidance to staff, are also relevant to the management of learning opportunities. Senior managers, academic and student support staff all demonstrate a commitment to engage fully with expectations and indicators in the Quality Code, *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality*. The College has a structured timetable for reviewing its policies in the light of developments with the Quality Code. For example, it has recently adjusted its policies on attendance and public information about learning opportunities and is committed to updating a number of other policies by March 2014. This good practice identified in paragraph 1.3 also applies to the management of learning opportunities.

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

2.4 The College's Teaching and Learning Policy provides suitable guidance for the delivery of the programmes. It includes measurable objectives which function as indicators for assessing progress to assure and enhance the quality of delivery at unit, programme and College levels. In line with the Teaching and Learning Policy, senior managers take a strategic and evaluative approach to teaching and learning that aligns closely with the Quality Code.

2.5 The College has a range of mechanisms suitable for overseeing its learning and teaching although the system of teaching observation needs further development. Feedback from students on their teaching and learning experience is extensive including the use of anonymous questionnaires and feedback from student representatives. Students value the teaching they receive. Senior managers review learning materials prior to distribution. Senior academic management undertake quality reviews to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They make effective use of comments from external examiners in the next learning and teaching cycle. All staff undergo appraisals and a thorough induction which includes information about college policies. The College observation of teaching is of two types; peer observation and a managerial form undertaken by the Head of Academic Services. All staff are in the process of receiving an observation by the Head of Academic Services. However, the peer observation scheme has not been in operation this semester due to difficulties of organisation associated with the growth in the number of part-time staff. The aim is to begin it again next semester when more full-time staff will be in post. Both types of observation use the same form to report the outcomes. There are no formal guidelines for the allocation of grades in either type of teaching observation. It would be **desirable** for the College to continue to develop the effectiveness of the observation of teaching schemes.

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

2.6 The College provides effective support for the student body in a variety of ways. Full-time student support lecturers on each campus provide helpful advice on preparing assignments and other academic and attendance issues. Admissions staff operate an effective system for monitoring student attendance. They are responsible personally for following up with the non-attendees and encouraging better attendance by providing helpful

guidance and support. Tutors are readily available, and contactable by email, to provide academic support. Senior staff organise workshops specifically for students aimed at improving prospects for academic and employment success. The College has developed an effective process for obtaining student views on a formal basis. The students elect representatives for their particular programme and entry date who meet together with staff at two well attended student representatives committees, one for each campus. Nominated individuals from these committees are members of the Academic Committee. Students find the student representation system very helpful in organising both academic and pastoral support as well as dealing effectively with any other issues they may have. The College feeds back its actions as a result of this student input to the representatives and puts a summary on the VLE. The effectiveness of the student representation system is **good practice**.

2.7 On some modules the number of students who did not submit work last year was high. For example, on some HND Hospitality Management units, including the Facilities and Operations unit, where 25 out of 30 students did not submit on time. The College is currently developing a progression policy aimed at improving the situation. Students who fail to submit work may not be able to progress to the next year thus reducing the pressure on students due to the trailing of assessments. It is **advisable** for the College to reduce the amount of student work not submitted on time.

How effectively does the College develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?

2.8 Arrangements for staff development support effectively the delivery of the provision. The College Staff Development Policy states that all staff members will have opportunities to participate actively in their own development. Managers ensure that these opportunities align with the College's strategic aims. The Senior Management Committee monitors the effectiveness of staff development policy on an annual basis, introducing changes as required. The College requires all new members of academic staff to attend the College's induction programme. Lecturers are briefed about UK higher education sector requirements and the College's expectations for unit and programme development and delivery. The College identifies the development needs of new staff during their induction and after six months. The College has an appraisal system that uses various measures of performance to identify staff development needs.

2.9 Staff are involved in a range of useful internal development activities. For example, the College provides technical workshops aimed at improving knowledge and strengthening skill sets, and academic sessions focused upon teaching practice or subject matters. In July, the external examiner in business complemented the College on its staff development efforts in providing monthly workshops for assessors and internal verifiers. In some cases, joint workshops for staff and students take place. Although not directly supported by the College, the Academic Managers encourage staff to undertake additional qualifications and to join professional bodies. For example, several lecturers are undertaking postgraduate qualifications, including doctorates and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

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

2.10 The College ensures that learning resources are sufficient to enable students to achieve unit and programme learning outcomes. The College does not have a formal learning resource policy. However, staff and students are able to use the formal procedures described in paragraph 1.2 to make proposals for increased resources which are considered finally by the Senior Management Committee and signed off by the Acting Principal.

Students reported that the student representative system had been effective in obtaining increased access to resources such as study materials and books. The College has increased the availability of written learning materials by more use of e-books and programme-specific study guides, by working with local libraries and the development of the VLE as a teaching tool. The College is actively working to increase the experience of students on HND Hospitality Management of the industry by, for example, lectures from industry professionals and visits to relevant companies.

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

3 Information about learning opportunities

How effectively does the College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The website is the primary method for publishing information to external audiences and provides clear information about learning opportunities. It provides information on the application process, the programmes on offer, admissions and the College in general. The College is intending to publish a prospectus on the website in mid 2014. The current draft version is in consultation.

3.2 The College produces helpful guidance for students to support their learning. The student handbook contains appropriate programme information. Unit handbooks provide students with helpful guidance at the subject level. The College has a separate VLE for the Ilford and Wembley sites which provide electronic copies of documents like student and unit handbooks, as well as additional teaching materials. Students find the VLE valuable. The College produces student study manuals in the form of attractive text books which contain detailed, well-structured information and supportive materials for each unit. These are highly valued by the students and provide a strong core of supportive learning materials. The detailed, well-structured and supportive study manuals are **good practice**. The College publishes an excellent student newsletter. For example, it contains important and timely updates on College activities and policies, feedback from the College on student requests and the work of the student representatives. It is an effective means of communication between staff and students. Students commented positively upon the usefulness of these newsletters. The effective communication with students using the student newsletter is **good practice**. The College also uses social media for keeping students informed of developments.

3.3 The College publishes a suitable range of guidance and policy documents for staff. Staff have a proper understanding of these documents which are used in their induction and are available in the Quality Assurance Manual.

How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.4 Since the December 2012 review visit, the College has developed a more robust system for checking the information it produces although there are a few minor errors. The final responsibility for reviewing the content of all public information lies with senior managers. The College regularly updates its policies and key documentation using a proper system of version control. The process generates records to monitor responsibility. For example, recent Academic Committee and Senior Management Committee meetings have reviewed and edited the Student Handbook and the Quality Assurance Manual,

providing an audit trail of the development of these materials. A number of key documents and policies have recently been revised to reflect the Quality Code including the Admissions and the Assessment policies. There is a clear process for production and review of programme materials. However, there are a small number of minor inconsistencies in the programme information on the website and some web information relates to 2012 not the current year. Some of the policy documents do not use a consistent vocabulary; for example, the Staff Development Policy refers to heads of department, a term not used within the College management structure. It would be **desirable** for the College to continue to develop procedures for checking information about learning opportunities.

3.5 There is robust process for the monitoring and audit of the VLE. This includes a baseline of information that each programme must provide and the weekly monitoring of activity and use. Module leaders on different campuses coordinate the sharing of materials on the VLE.

3.6 The College's social media sites are controlled appropriately by designated staff, although the College does not yet have a formal social media policy.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Action plan³

Nelson College London action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of November 2013						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the high level of engagement by staff with the Quality Code (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.3) 	All staff are aware of relevant chapters of the Quality Code, following the guidance in managing and delivering the college courses	<p>Detailed series of discussions on the relevance of individual chapters with staff</p> <p>Map college policies to the chapters of the Quality Code</p>	<p>September 2014, and then subsequently every year</p> <p>December 2014</p>	Head of Academic Services	Head of Quality Assurance	<p>Satisfactory outcome on all College activities</p> <p>All policies clearly mapped to the Quality Code</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of the student representation system (paragraph 2.6) 	<p>Student representatives are engaged with the College in reviewing and proposing college policies and practices</p> <p>Student satisfaction at senior involvement</p> <p>Student-centred College</p>	<p>Enhance the level of involvement of student representatives in Academic Committee and Student Representative Committee</p> <p>Train new representatives for all new cohorts</p>	<p>Every term, starting from September 2013</p> <p>October 2014, and within first four weeks</p>	Academic Manager	Head of Academic Services	<p>Very good student feedback report</p> <p>Minutes of Academic Committee and Student Representative Committee</p>

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

	policies		from the start of a new cohort			meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the detailed, well-structured and supportive study manuals (paragraph 3.2) 	Study manuals are available to all students covering all relevant learning outcomes	Produce study manuals for all courses offered Print and issue study manual on time	September 2014 Make study manual available within first four weeks from term commences	Academic Manager Academic Manager	Head of Academic Services	Minutes of Student Representative Committee Student Feedback Statistics Printed copy of manuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective communication with students using the student newsletter (paragraph 3.2). 	Newsletter is produced in a timely fashion and it covers topics relevant to students and staff and other issues emerge from minutes of meetings	Produce newsletter and print in a timely manner and communicate it to students via e-learning portal and make hard copies available within the college	Communicate the newsletter to students within first four weeks of each academic term starting from January 2014	Programme Administrator	Head of Marketing	Public information review form
Advisable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is advisable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure procedures are in place to combat plagiarism successfully 	Academic misconduct is detected, reported and action taken	Subscribe to and pilot use of plagiarism-detection software Fully implement plagiarism-detection	July 2014 March 2015	Head of Quality Assurance	Senior Management Committee	Minute of Assessment Board and Internal Verification Committee

(paragraph 1.6)		software for all second year students				meetings
		Continue to use existing strategies to detect and combat plagiarism	January 2014 and then each term	Academic Manager	Academic Committee	Reports produced by external verifiers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce the amount of student work not submitted on time (paragraph 2.7). 	Ensure students submit their work on time as per progression policy	Submission data are recorded on the Review and Enhancement Process reports (at programme level)	July 2014	Academic Manager	Internal Verifiers Committee	Minutes of Internal Verifiers Committee, Academic Committee, and Assessment Board meetings
		Reflection on the submission data records on Review and Enhancement Process report and Annual Programme Monitoring (across all programmes) reports	December 2014	Head of Quality Assurance	Academic Committee	Review and Enhancement Process and Annual Programme Monitoring reports
		Develop progression policy so that disciplinary actions are taken against students who submit inadequate number work	April 2014			
Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the committee structure at programme level (paragraph 1.2) 	Organise Programme Committee meeting and ensure issues emerging from it are dealt with	Develop the terms of reference of Programme Committee and update Quality Manual and Governance Manual to reflect the changes	December 2014	Head of Quality Assurance	Senior Management Committee	Minutes of Senior Management Committee meeting Minutes of Programme Committee meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor progress on improving feedback on assessment (paragraph 1.5) 	Feedback on student assessments provided to students enhances their developmental potential	<p>New assessors will be trained to provide adequate feedback</p> <p>Internal verifiers comment on the level of appropriate feedback</p> <p>Internal Verifiers Committee monitor the adequacy of feedback provided to students</p>	<p>April 2014 and then every term</p> <p>April 2014 and then every committee</p>	<p>Academic Manager</p> <p>Head of Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Head of Academic Services</p> <p>Academic Committee</p>	<p>Minutes of Internal Verifiers Committee and Academic Committee</p> <p>Internal verifiers forms of assessment decisions</p> <p>Record of assessment feedback provided to students</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop the effectiveness of the observation of teaching schemes (paragraph 2.5) 	Conduct peer review and teaching observations in each term using different types of forms so that teaching observations are more effective and allows observee to learn from post observation meeting	<p>Design a new teaching observation form with a field for allocation of overall grades</p> <p>Conduct peer review and</p>	<p>April 2014, then every term</p> <p>April 2014,</p>	<p>Academic Manager</p> <p>Programme</p>	<p>Head of Academic Services</p> <p>Head of</p>	<p>Review and Enhancement Process and Annual Programme Monitoring reports</p> <p>Satisfactory peer</p>

		teaching observations	then every term	leaders	Academic Services	review forms and peer review report Satisfactory review of teaching observation forms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop procedures for checking information about learning opportunities (paragraph 3.4). 	Develop procedures to support the public information policy to ensure that information on learning opportunities available on the public domain is accurate and up-to-date	<p>Monitor website on a regular basis to ensure information on it are reviewed annually and are kept up-to-date</p> <p>Review all policy documents to ensure that terminology is used consistently across the College</p>	<p>June 2014, December 2014 and then every six months</p> <p>December 2014</p>	<p>Head of Marketing</p> <p>Head of Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Senior Management Committee</p> <p>Senior Management Committee</p>	<p>Review minutes of Senior Management Committee</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Public information review forms</p>

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight.

Glossary

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

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

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

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 .

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

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

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 QAA's review processes.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

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*.

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 review processes.

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

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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.

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.

provider (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

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

threshold academic standards 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 for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

QAA628 - R3767 - FEB/14

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786