Higher Education Review of New College Telford

February 2015

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at New College Telford. The review took place from 24 to 26 February 2015 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Daphne Rowlands
- Dr Iain Mossman (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by New College Telford and to make judgements as to whether or not its 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, 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
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

In reviewing New College Telford the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The themes for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about New College Telford

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at New College Telford.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations **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 feature of **good practice** at New College Telford.

- The effective use of electronic assessment and the high quality of feedback in HND Music Production (Expectation B6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation** to New College Telford.

By September 2015:

- ensure that senior managers are able to more fully monitor and review all aspects of higher education provision, including teaching and learning (Expectations B3 and B8)

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that New College Telford is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The progress being made by the College to involve students as partners in the quality assurance and enhancement of their provision (Expectation B5).

Theme: Student Employability

The College takes measures to increase the employability of its students. This is achieved through the integration of work-related skills and knowledge into the curriculum content, learning and teaching, and assessments. The links with employers, the provision of work-based learning opportunities, and careers advice are effective in supporting student employability. Teaching staff are experienced practitioners who are able to use their professional knowledge and skills to help students develop their employability.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining Higher Education Review.

About New College Telford

New College Telford (the College) is a large sixth form college based on one site in Wellington. Its key strategy regarding higher education includes increasing the progression of level 3 students into higher education, to raise aspirations, widen participation, and to engage with employers and community groups. In 2014-15, the College offered three higher education awards: a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business (Pearson), HND Music Production (Pearson), and a Foundation Degree (FdA) in Early Years, year two only (University of Warwick). A fourth programme, FdA in Events Management (University of Derby), did not recruit.

Since the Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) in 2010, there has been a change in the organisational structure of the College, with the appointment of three Assistant Principals, one of whom has the responsibility for managing the higher education provision. The College has invested in new buildings. It has also established a Higher Education Study Centre with independent IT resources.

Recruitment to existing higher education programmes continues to be a challenge. The College was not able to recruit to the FdA in Early Years and the FdA in Events Management, as mentioned above. Low application numbers meant that programmes were not viable and the College considered that, with such low numbers, the learning experiences of students would be compromised. Wellington is ranked the 20th most deprived area nationally for education. The College is working to increase access to higher education.

The College offers two HNDs (in Business and in Music Production) with Pearson. It now has two new university partners. With the University of Warwick, it offers an FdA in Early Years, and with the University of Derby, an FdA in Events Management.

The IQER summative report in September 2010 considered that there could be confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, in the standards of the awards, and in the quality of learning opportunities offered. Reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

The IQER identified six areas of good practice relating to feedback to students, opportunities for top-up degrees, assignment briefs, the recruitment process, the provision of documents to students, and the higher education handbook. In all cases, the College has ensured that these good practices have been maintained and used to enhance the provision.

There was one advisable recommendation, which was to review thoroughly resource allocation procedures for the higher education programmes to ensure that studio equipment is up-to-date, in working order, and available to support learning. The College introduced a three-year cycle for resource planning and regular updating of software.

There were three desirable recommendations relating to the use of the academic infrastructure, the staff development programme and developing links with industry.

The College reviews its policies to ensure they are aligned with external reference points. It has focused its staff development policy on higher education and continues to develop its relationship with employers.

Explanation of the findings about New College Telford

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and 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* are met by:

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1 The College offers three awards: two HNDs and an FdA in Early Years franchised by the University of Warwick. It also has approval to offer an FdA in Events Management validated by the University of Derby, although this currently has not recruited students.

1.2 The FdA in Early Years is subject to an agreement for collaborative provision between the College and the University of Warwick. The HNDs are subject to Pearson's approval criteria. Documentation outlines division of responsibilities between the College and the relevant awarding body and organisation to which the College adheres.

1.3 The content of the programmes is prescribed by the awarding bodies, which have the primary responsibility for aligning qualifications with *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and structuring programmes around units and credits.

1.4 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing documents that relate to the quality framework that informs programme approval and monitoring procedures. The team also met a range of staff, including those from the awarding body and organisation.
The internal and external quality assurance procedures in place enable the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.5 Validation documentation demonstrates the rigorous process by which a new FdA is approved. Teaching staff at the College liaise with the relevant awarding body in developing new programmes, for example, the FdA in Events Management.

1.6 The College has recently introduced an internal approval procedure, which is being implemented. The process entails an initial consideration of new programme proposals, supported by costing evidence. The Curriculum Planning Committee then considers proposed new programmes, and the Higher Education Committee provides views on draft documents for the programmes.

1.7 The College is responsible for working within the guidelines of the awarding body and organisation. The College does not design the content of Pearson programmes, although it chooses which units to teach and is responsible for writing assessments. Units are chosen to take account of employability needs and to articulate with its level 3 provision. The University of Warwick creates the content of programmes and provides the assessment mechanisms for the FdA in Early Years programmes. The College is responsible for delivery of the programme. The division of responsibilities is clearly set out in College documentation**.**

1.8 Module information is given to students on the College intranet site and in handbooks, which clearly outline the number of credits needed. Full specifications are available on the website and signposted in programme handbooks. Reference is made to the awarding body's website in the FdA in Early Years handbook. Assessment criteria within handbooks and assignment briefs outline the number of credits and marking criteria, and reflect the relevant level of the FHEQ. Students understand what they have to do to achieve their qualification. External examiner reports confirm that standards are appropriate.

1.9 The review team concludes that the ultimate responsibility for the allocation of qualifications to the appropriate level of the FHEQ rests with the relevant awarding body. The College contributes to the process by ensuring that its selection of units enables students to achieve their intended learning outcomes. The College effectively fulfils its requirements as outlined within its partners' guidelines. The team concludes therefore 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

1.10 The College itself does not award qualifications. It works with the University of Warwick to deliver a FdA and with Pearson to deliver Edexcel qualifications. The College has agreements with its awarding body and organisation, and clear guidelines for its responsibilities. Assessment regulations are set out by the relevant awarding body or organisation.

1.11 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting a range of staff and by scrutinising documentation that sets out responsibilities. The internal and external quality assurance procedures in place enable the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.12 There are clear responsibilities for the College to carry out. The FdAs in Early Years and Events Management are programmes governed by partnership agreements. Approval is given by Pearson to run a number of Higher National programmes. The College follows the relevant awarding bodies' or organisation's guidelines, which are outlined within the BTEC Assessment Guide and the University handbooks. Internal verification and second marking procedures are carried out by the College in accordance with guidelines. External examiner reports confirm the appropriateness of assessments. External examiners are appointed by Pearson and both the degree-awarding bodies, and make annual visits to assess the suitability of continuing to run programmes.

1.13 Relationships with the degree-awarding bodies and Pearson are maintained on a regular basis by Heads of Curriculum Areas. Regular meetings are held with the Universities. Staff are kept up-to-date by alerts from Pearson, and through the provision of external examiner reports. A quality nominee within the College is responsible for liaising with Pearson and disseminating information to staff.

1.14 There is a clear committee structure that outlines reporting procedures. Minutes of the Higher Education Committee, College Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team meetings show that higher education is discussed. Actions arising from the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Improvement Plan are presented to the College Leadership Team.

1.15 Arrangements for the management of higher education are outlined in the College's Higher Education Strategy. The Principal has ultimate responsibility for higher education in the College, delegated to the Assistant Principal Curriculum. The Principal is kept informed of higher education through the quality and reporting structures. The newly formed Higher Education Committee, chaired by the Assistant Principal Curriculum has responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of awarding bodies and organisation are met. The Committee meets twice termly and reports to the Senior Leadership Team. The Quality Coordinator liaises with the Higher Education Committee and the Student Council.

1.16 College staff are made aware of their responsibilities through guidelines issued by the Universities and by Pearson. Staff awareness of Subject Benchmark Statements is not universal. The College may wish to address this in line with its proposed expansion of higher

education provision. Regular meetings are held with the University of Warwick, and information alerts are received from Pearson and through external examiner reports.

1.17 The review team concludes that the College adheres to the frameworks and regulations of the awarding bodies and Pearson to maintain academic standards. Therefore, 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

1.18 As the College is not a degree-awarding body, it takes responsibility for using reference points provided to maintain standards in delivery and assessment. The exact responsibilities delegated to the College by the awarding body and organisation are laid down in responsibilities checklists.

1.19 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting a range of staff, including those from the two awarding bodies and the awarding institution. The team examined documentation, including regulations and guidelines issued by the University of Warwick and Pearson. The internal and external quality assurance procedures in place enable the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.20 Full programme specifications are available on the College's intranet. The University of Warwick produces a handbook for the FdA in Early Years. Programme specifications contain up-to-date information and can be accessed on the intranet. Each HND programme has a generic handbook with specific information. This information is made more accessible to students through programme handbooks, which provide an overview of the curriculum, learning outcomes and assessments.

1.21 Programme records are maintained using a web-based document editing programme. All assessment marks and comments are recorded using this platform. Small student group numbers, together with a small teaching team, facilitate the oversight of student work.

1.22 The review team concludes that the definitive programme documentation, including programme specifications maintained by the College, is complete. Therefore, 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 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

1.23 All new provision is subject to the respective awarding bodies' validation processes. The awarding bodies are responsible for confirming that programmes are designed to meet the standards specified in the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements, and their internal framework requirements. The College is responsible for preparing documentation as appropriate to the process, frameworks, and regulations of each awarding body. To support these responsibilities the College has introduced a detailed programme planning and approval procedure, which sets out the internal approval route prior to submitting any validation documentation to an awarding body.

1.24 The internal programme planning and approval procedure sets out appropriate steps to ensure that a proposed programme is viable, standards are set at a level which meets UK standards, and fits with the College's Higher Education Strategy. Proposals progress through three proportionate stages, with the third being an internal approval panel, which considers full documentation prior to submission to an awarding body. These procedures enable the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.25 In testing this Expectation, the review team reviewed the self-evaluation document and associated evidence, and considered agreements with awarding bodies; the programme approval procedure; programme development documentation; and minutes of the Curriculum Development Committee. The team also met senior staff and awarding body representatives.

1.26 Initial documentation for two new programmes in development, for validation by the University of Derby, demonstrate that the internal planning and approval procedure is being followed. The review team considered minutes of the Curriculum Development Committee, which highlighted appropriate scrutiny. Senior staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the approval process in the College and approval routes with awarding bodies. Awarding body staff confirmed that the College had followed the approval procedures as outlined by the University of Warwick, and that appropriate units and were selected for the Pearson programmes.

1.27 Based on the clear awareness of the procedures for developing programmes in the College, and the appropriate manner in which the College had complied with awarding bodies' and organisation approval processes, 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

1.28 The College delivers programmes in accordance with its agreements with its awarding bodies and organisation. It follows regulations regarding assessment of achievement of standards. Assessment design, marking and moderation processes, although slightly different with each awarding body, are followed appropriately and ensure that qualifications are awarded only as a result of the achievement of relevant learning outcomes. For the Pearson awards, the College operates an internal verification procedure to ensure that assessments are fit for purpose before being issued to students. First marking is conducted inside the College, with a sample internally verified, and with external verification by the Pearson-appointed external examiner during the examiner visit.

1.29 The internal and external quality assurance procedures in place enable the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.30 In testing the Expectation, the review team considered awarding body agreements and regulations, college documentation on assessment, external examiner reports, assessment briefs, and samples of graded assessments. The team also met with teaching staff with responsibility for the operation of assessment.

1.31 Teaching staff have a strong understanding of the assessment life cycle of their programmes, and highlighted that new staff have specific mentoring to support their understanding of the assessment process. For the FdA in Early Years, as a franchise agreement, assessments are set by the University of Warwick. First and second marking is operated by the College, with samples moderated by the University. Assignments consulted by the review team indicated that this system is operating securely, while the external examiner for this programme has confirmed that academic standards are maintained to national and awarding body standards. For the College's HNDs, assessments are set by the College. Assignment briefs consulted by the review team indicated that they were designed to assess achievement against the relevant learning outcomes. First marking and internal verification take place in the College, with external scrutiny by the external examiner. External examiner reports for the HND Music Production confirm that standards are being upheld and the internal verification system is effective.

1.32 Overall, the College applies the assessment regulations and procedures of its awarding bodies effectively. The review team therefore 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

1.33 The awarding bodies check and confirm that the College meets national standards. These differ with each of the awarding bodies that work with the College. Programme Leaders for the FdA in Early Years prepare a report to the University of Warwick's Partnership Colleges Foundation Degree Management Meetings three times per academic year; the University of Warwick's Course Director also maintains close contact with the College. There is an annual review meeting and monitoring process, which was informal during the programme's first year but will be formalised in subsequent years. For its Pearson programmes, the College provides evidence that threshold academic standards are maintained through internal moderation processes, which are subject to verification by the Pearson-appointed external examiner during their annual visit.

1.34 The review team concludes that this approach enables the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.35 The review team tested this approach to Expectation A3.3 by examining the College's monitoring documentation, internal Self-Assessment Reports and external examiner reports. The team also met senior staff, teaching staff and awarding body representatives.

1.36 Both senior and teaching staff were aware of their responsibilities with regard to the completion of the awarding bodies' monitoring and review processes. In examining the Partnership Reports to the University of Warwick, the review team found that these demonstrate appropriate scrutiny of issues relating to the academic standards of the FdA in Early Years; facilitate additional reflection by the College; and consider the feedback from student module evaluations. External examiner reports for the HND Music Production affirm the effective management and appropriate standards of the programme. Awarding body representatives met by the team were satisfied with the College's engagement with their processes.

1.37 In addition to awarding bodies' processes, the College operates an internal Self-Assessment Report monitoring process, which further ensures the maintenance of academic standards for all higher education programmes. As detailed under the Quality Code, *Chapter B8*, each course develops an annual Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan, which is monitored in year by senior management, with termly People and Quality Meetings offering additional oversight.

1.38 The review team concludes that the College manages its responsibilities for its own, and its awarding bodies' and organisation's, monitoring and review procedures effectively, with appropriate scrutiny to maintain academic standards. Therefore, 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

1.39 The College recognises the value of engaging with external viewpoints to assure academic standards, particularly in their relationships with external examiners. Furthermore, working more closely with employers is part of the Higher Education Strategy. It is the degree-awarding bodies' responsibility to operate the external examining system and ensure appropriate external scrutiny during validation. The College engages with external examiners appropriately and responds to their suggestions through the Self-Assessment Report process. External examiners have highlighted that the College is meeting, and in some cases exceeding, UK academic standards. In addition to the scrutiny of the awarding bodies, the College's internal approval process for new programmes requires Programme Leaders to have considered the external context of the course and to evidence engagement with external stakeholders in the first stage of approval.

1.40 The review team concludes that this approach enables the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

1.41 The review team tested this Expectation through considering external examiners' reports, documentation concerning programme approval and validation, and through meeting with senior staff, teaching staff, and speaking with employers by phone.

1.42 Senior staff confirmed that, while engagement with employers has not been fully implemented, there are ongoing discussions to involve employers in developments around the National Hotel School. There was also a clear understanding of the need to engage with external voices during the development of programmes. Teaching staff are frequently practitioners in their respective areas and thus bring external viewpoints into consideration, with external speakers involved in aspects of the HND Business and HND Music Production. College monitoring reports demonstrate that external examiners' viewpoints and reports are appropriately considered.

1.43 Given the appropriate understanding and engagement demonstrated by the College in complying with the degree-awarding bodies' requirements for externality, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met 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 other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.44 In reaching its judgement about the the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.45 The College meets all seven Expectations, each with a low level of associated risk. There are no recommendations. The College works effectively with its degree-awarding bodies and with Pearson to maintain academic standards. It adheres to the set guidelines regarding each of the Expectations.

1.46 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations at the College **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 College currently delivers three higher education programmes, the content of which is determined by its awarding bodies and organisation, who hold ultimate responsibility for the approval of programmes. In designing these programmes the College followed its awarding bodies' and organisation's robust approval processes, which ensure that academic standards are maintained and the quality of learning opportunities assured.

2.2 The College has plans, set out in its Higher Education Strategy, to expand its portfolio of provision up to 19 programmes over a three-year period. In order to assure this approach to programme development, the College introduced an appropriate programme planning and approval procedure with associated guidance in July 2014. This procedure takes the form of three proportionate stages: from initial discussions with a Head of Curriculum Area; to developing programme documentation, costings and evidence; through to an internal approval panel, the Curriculum Planning Committee. The procedure includes requirements for Programme Leaders to involve student opinion while developing their proposal, and seek employer engagement at an appropriate stage. Following internal agreement, programmes are submitted to the awarding bodies for approval and validation. The procedure, and programmes approved under it, will be evaluated annually by the Higher Education Committee as part of its annual cycle.

2.3 The review team concludes that this approach is, in theory, fully aligned with the Expectation.

2.4 The review team reviewed the operation of this procedure through considering documentation, including: the programme planning and approval procedure; guidance issued to staff; minutes of the Curriculum Planning Committee; and preliminary documentation for several programmes. The team also met the Acting Principal, senior staff, teaching staff and support staff, as well as representatives of the College's awarding body and organisation.

2.5 Senior College staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the approval routes for programmes, internally and with awarding bodies, with ideas for programmes generated both internally and from listening to employer needs. The College also recognises that the internal programme development structures are in their early stages of operation, and that no programme has yet passed through the entire internal approval procedure. However, initial documentation for new programmes in development for validation by the University of Derby demonstrate that the planning and approval procedure is being followed, with documentation developed and then considered by the Curriculum Planning Committee. Awarding body representatives confirmed that the College had followed their procedures for course validation.

2.6 Teaching staff responsible for developing documentation are clear about their responsibilities; appropriate conversations and links were made in the discussions around

the choice of units on the HND Music Production. This included consideration of student employment needs, and the relevance of units against developments in industry, as well as links to the top-up degree arrangement at the University of Wolverhampton.

2.7 Based on the soundness of the procedure, and the understanding demonstrated by all levels of College staff around their responsibilities in programme development, 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

2.8 The College has a clearly set out higher education admissions procedure, which has been agreed with its partner Universities. It differentiates between applicants coming through UCAS and those who apply directly to the College. The procedure sets out guidelines for recruitment, selection and admissions procedures. The College has a number of ways in which it encourages the recruitment of students, which are monitored by the Higher Education Committee.

2.9 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting with a range of staff, including teaching and support staff. The team also read documentation relating to the admissions procedure.

2.10 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.11 The Progression Coordinator follows standards outlined in Supporting Professionalism in Admissions training sessions. Part of the remit for this post is the encouragement of higher education progression within the College. Higher education awareness events have taken place in order to raise awareness of programmes. Universities are invited and a representative from the University of Warwick attended. Programmes are well promoted to local employers within relevant fields, for example, the FdA in Early Years.

2.12 Entry requirements are clearly stated on the College's website, and an application button leads to an online application form. Applications are made through the Universities' admissions service, as well as directly to the College. Applications for the FdA in Early Years are made through the University of Warwick, and records of the current position of applicants are maintained by the College.

2.13 All applicants are interviewed by the relevant Programme Tutor, who follows a standard set of interview documents, including an assessment task provided by the University of Warwick for FdA applicants. Where appropriate, applicants for HND Music Production are given a pre-interview task to aid the interview discussion. Students confirm that they all had interviews, including an assessment task. Information given relating to the programme was accurate. Applicants with non-traditional qualifications may be accepted depending upon their experience. For example, a prospective student working in a nursery may have the relevant experience to undertake an FdA in Early Years qualification, or a student with relevant music experience to undertake the HND Music Production.

2.14 Provisional decisions are communicated to students during the interview process, and reasons are stated on the interview pro forma. Applicants for the FdA in Early Years are offered a place subject to approval from the University of Warwick. Decisions are then communicated to the applicant by the University. Applicants are entitled to request feedback following an interview, if required. Acceptance letters are sent to applicants outlining any conditions and explaining the next steps.

2.15 The review team concludes that the processes in place provide effective recruitment, selection and admissions procedures. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.16 Improvement of teaching is integrated into the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Improvement Plan, which outlines areas for improvement, together with actions to achieve this and named personnel to complete the actions. Observation reports are received by the College Leadership Team.

2.17 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting with staff and students, and by reviewing a range of evidence, including policies, external examiner reports and records of staff qualifications.

2.18 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.19 The Assistant Principal Quality and Performance has responsibility for the quality of teaching. Staff are observed in accordance with the Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy, which clearly outlines the principles for observations. The Policy is made available to staff on the intranet.

2.20 The observation process is a three-tiered procedure. Staff are observed formally on an annual basis, and a grade is given followed by a written report, which may include actions for improvement. Observations are followed up with an ungraded observation by the Head of the relevant Curriculum Area, and are used to identify any training needs and feed into staff development requirements. Peer observations also take place and provide a mechanism for sharing good practice. New staff are further observed by their line manager. Staff teaching on higher education programmes are observed by the same process as used across the College, although observations may include some commentary on higher level questioning. Observations feed into staff appraisals in line with the College's policy. Actions to improve teaching are monitored through agenda items in College Leadership Team meetings. The annual report of observations commenting on cross-College teaching is submitted to the College Leadership Team, which does not comment on teaching at higher education level separately. There is no clear strategy for higher education teaching and no means of separating analysis of higher level teaching within College reporting documentation once it is amalgamated into whole college teaching. The review team **recommends** that the College ensures that senior managers are able to more fully monitor and review all aspects of higher education provision, including teaching and learning.

2.21 Students met by the review team stated that teaching is challenging, lessons are well structured and staff are knowledgeable about their subject. Students are aware of what they have to do to achieve their learning outcomes. Assessment mechanisms are outlined in handbooks, assignments are varied and feedback is developmental. Assessed assignment turnaround time is generally timely. Assessments are designed to support student learning.

2.22 Teaching and support staff are appropriately qualified, and the College is financially supporting teaching staff to study for higher degrees. The College's Continuous Professional Development Policy sets out expectations for staff development together with guidance on

how to apply for support, which includes describing how students will benefit. One member of staff is being supported to study for an MA in Education. The College has provided some specific staff development related to higher education and staff have attended conferences.

2.23 In light of the evidence presented, the review team concludes that the College's basis for teaching and learning is effective. Therefore, 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 The College has a small higher education cohort, many of whom have progressed through the College from level 3 programmes. Some support mechanisms encompass both further and higher education students.

2.25 The College ensures programmes are appropriately resourced at validation, which is a prerequisite of running both Pearson and University of Warwick programmes. Programme resources, which include staffing and subject-specific items are monitored annually to ensure relevance and sufficiency.

2.26 The review team tested the Expectation by examining a range of evidence, including programme approval paperwork and programme handbooks. The team also met support staff, teaching staff and students.

2.27 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.28 The College has several ways of identifying students who need support. Students applying through UCAS can identify their particular learning needs. The College has an Additional Learning Support Policy, which outlines students' entitlement to additional support. Referral for additional support may also come through teaching staff at any time during the year.

2.29 Student Services provide a range of advice, including drop-in sessions and help with job searches. Visits have been made to universities in order to raise awareness of higher education opportunities. Careers advice for students on the HND Music Production is readily available from teaching staff who are also practitioners. Financial advice, anger management and advice for coping with stress are available. There are also well managed drop-in sessions. All support services are clearly identified in handbooks. The student submission noted that some students expressed little awareness of Student Services. This matter has been resolved by the information in these handbooks.

2.30 Resources are scrutinised at validation and annually during programme reviews. Heads of Curriculum Areas have budgets for resources and liaise with the Finance Director. The Capital Committee approves resources for new programmes, and those above the budget are allocated to the area Course Leaders. Urgent requests, for example, the need for more specialist computers, are dealt with more quickly. Annual programme reviews evaluate resources. Students regard resources as sufficient. More specifically, HND Music Production students appreciate the well equipped music studio.

2.31 The student submission highlighted library resources as an area for development. The College has responded by stocking more books and ensuring students have a library induction. Students on the FdA in Early Years programme also have access to University of Warwick resources. A discrete study centre has been provided for higher education students. This has computers and provides quiet study space. It is well used by students.

2.32 Students have an induction, which they find useful, and during which key aspects of college life and course specific information are explained. The College produces a document for staff on the difference between further and higher education teaching, and students the

review team met stated that they were aware of a difference in progressing from a level 3 to a level 4 course. Students gave examples of being treated in a more adult way and becoming more independent learners.

2.33 The College has a Tutorial Policy, and there is an expectation that all students will have a record of tutorials. Tutorial records show that a variety of discussions and activities take place at group and individual level. Students confirmed that they have tutorials, which are helpful, and that staff are supportive and approachable. Discussion opportunities are available in relation to assignment work. An electronic tutorial system is used with HND Music Production students, which they find useful.

2.34 The College has appropriate arrangements in place to enable student development and achievement. Teaching and support staff provide students with the means to achieve learning outcomes, and learning resources are sufficient and well managed. The review team therefore 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

2.35 The College has taken steps to include student representation in its deliberative structures and committees. Student Council meetings and learner surveys provide opportunities for students to engage with the quality processes.

2.36 The review team met a range of senior and teaching staff, and a selection of students. The team also reviewed relevant documentation, including minutes of meetings and student surveys.

2.37 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.38 The College has a draft Enhancement Policy, which encompasses student involvement in learning. There is a newly appointed Student Liaison Officer whose remit is to broaden student involvement in quality issues. There are representatives from each of the three curriculum areas that offer higher education. A student representative document outlines the scope of the student roles. The College has made many attempts to include higher education students on the Student Council, although terms of reference for the Student Council imply it is only for further education students. Higher education students who met the review team expressed some lack of awareness of having been asked to join this committee. The review team **affirms** the progress being made by the College to involve students as partners in the quality assurance and enhancement of their provision.

2.39 Students attend the College's newly formed Higher Education Committee and produce comments. Two student representatives sit on the Board of Governors and the opportunity is open to higher education students. A role description outlines the duties of student representatives. The College has invited students to attend the Equality and Diversity Committee but there are no volunteers at present.

2.40 The College has a small higher education cohort, including part-time mature students. Responses to surveys are low. The College distributes an induction survey and a higher education induction survey, which has received some response. Students whom the review team met believe their views are taken into account. Examples were given of the installation of a keypad in the higher education study room and a more distinct identity of being a higher education student. Some students had met with external examiners and an external examiner report has been shared with HND Music Production students. HND Music Production students have held a focus group meeting, which demonstrates the College's responses to student views.

2.41 The College acknowledges that it does not yet have sufficiently formal opportunities for student engagement, but is working on ways to improve it. The review team concludes that the College has taken steps to engage students in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience, made more difficult by the small cohort of higher education students. There is an effective demonstration of how the College responds to student views. Therefore, 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

2.42 The College Assessment Policy, covering further and higher education provision, incorporates the requirements of its awarding bodies and organisation, and highlights the College's commitment to equitable, valid and reliable assessment processes. For the FdA in Early Years, assessments are set by the University of Warwick, and the College follows University procedures in carrying out assessments. Assessment of Pearson courses follows the BTEC Centre Guide to Managing Quality. Internal moderation operates according to awarding body processes, and external examiners confirm that academic standards are maintained to national and awarding body standards. Students are issued with comprehensive information about assessments. External examiner reports have commended the College's approach to assessment briefs, the quality of feedback and the management of assessment. Staff are suitably qualified and have appropriate experience to undertake their role in assessment; although some learning is work-based, no work placements or work experience are directly assessed. Accreditation of prior learning is not directly addressed within College policies, however, the College complies with awarding body policies and assesses learner standards individually during interview.

2.43 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.44 The review team considered the operation of assessment in the College through reviewing documentation, including: the Assessment Policy, guidance documents, programme information, programme handbooks, external examiner reports, assessment briefs, and the virtual learning environment. The team also met senior staff, teaching staff, support staff, students and awarding body representatives.

2.45 Teaching staff are knowledgeable of the assessment processes underpinning the programmes delivered at the College, and awarding body and organisation representatives confirmed the reliability of the College's approach to assessment. The College schedules assessments carefully to ensure students are not overwhelmed, and the schedule incorporates clear dates for submission. Additional support is offered to students where staff absences have put pressure on deadlines. Sample assignment briefs viewed by the review team addressed intended learning outcomes, and sample assignments incorporated thorough feedback. The College Assessment Policy indicates that assessed work should be marked within two weeks, and students confirmed that, barring exceptional circumstances, work was always returned within this timescale. While the College has previously admitted a student through the accreditation of prior learning route, there is currently no College policy which defines this process. However, all applicants to higher education undertake an interview with College teaching staff to assess their suitability, and awarding body policies are followed.

2.46 Students comment favourably on the quality of all aspects of assessment, including the variety of assignments, information about assignments, and the quality and timeliness of feedback. The reveiw team was given a demonstration of the online assessment practices for the HND Music Production by students, who highlighted the positive impact of the way

assessment had been managed through an online system, with particularly constructive feedback. The quality of assessment briefs, relevance to employment, and use of online systems have been recognised as good practice by the external examiner for this programme. The review team regards the effective use of electronic assessment and the high quality feedback in HND Music Production as **good practice**.

2.47 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low, on the basis of: the close adherence to the awarding bodies' and organisation's guidelines; positive evidence from external examiners; the enthusiasm of students towards assessment practices; and the solid understanding of the processes demonstrated by College staff.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.48 For the FdA in Early Years, the University of Warwick appoints external examiners in accordance with their regulatory framework. For Pearson programmes, external examiners are appointed by Pearson, who make annual visits to the College and meet with students. Awarding bodies are responsible for preparing external examiners for their role and responsibilities. The College receives external examiners' reports from the awarding bodies through the Quality Coordinator, Pearson Link Coordinator, and Programme Leaders. Reports are then are considered as part of annual process of programme review, with actions feeding into the programme Quality Improvement Plan.

2.49 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.50 The review team tested this approach against the Expectation by considering documentation, including external examiners' reports and supporting assessment documentation. The team also met senior staff, support staff and students.

2.51 External examiner reports are currently available only for the HND Music Production and FdA in Early Years. These reports confirm that national and awarding body standards are being met at the College. There have been few recommendations from external examiners for the HND Music Production, but these and general comments have been followed through in the annual course review and Quality Improvement Plans. Senior staff show a sound understanding of the external examining procedures at the College. The Quality Coordinator and Pearson Link Coordinator were clear in their roles, and highlighted their following-up of any outstanding actions within external examiner reports. Students on the HND Music Production programme confirmed that they had met with their external examiner, although they were uncertain whether they had been sent copies of the external examiner's reports. Students on the FdA in Early Years course receive external examiner's reports online from the University of Warwick.

2.52 Overall, the College has appropriate arrangements in place to make use of external examiners' reports and to respond to feedback from them. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation B7 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

2.53 The University of Warwick and Pearson hold ultimate responsibility for the annual and periodic monitoring and review of the programmes delivered at the College. The College complies with its responsibilities. For the FdA in Early Years, the College submits Partnership Reports to the Foundation Degree Management Meeting three times each year. There is also an annual review meeting and monitoring process, which was informal during the programme's first year, but will be formalised in subsequent years. For Pearson programmes, the College follows its responsibilities regarding external examining as elucidated against Expectation B7. Student feedback informs these reviews in differing ways, dependent on the area, with annual focus groups on the HND Music Production, and module evaluations in the FdA in Early Years.

2.54 Internal monitoring and review is also undertaken on an annual basis at programme level as part of the Self-Assessment Report process, with higher education programmes completing an Annual Monitoring Report with an associated Quality Improvement Plan. Staff completing these reviews have time remitted to assist with the associated workload. Quality Improvement Plans are monitored in year by senior management, and through termly People and Quality Meetings, following which the Assistant Principal Quality and Performance compiles a College-wide Self-Assessment Report, monitored by senior staff and College Governors.

2.55 The review team judged that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.56 The review team examined the operation of programme monitoring and review through considering documentation, including: reports submitted to awarding bodies; the outputs of the Self-Assessment Report process; minutes of the Self-Assessment Report Validation Panel; and other associated documents. The review team also met senior staff, teaching and support staff, and with representatives from the University of Warwick and Pearson.

2.57 Senior staff and support staff are able to participate fully in the College's, and the awarding bodies' and organisation's, monitoring and review processes. The Assistant Principal Quality and Perfromance takes an important role in overseeing the Self-Assessment Report process and overall monitoring of programmes, and, with the Assistant Principal Curriculum, has an overview of the health of the College's higher education provision. Awarding body representatives confirmed that the College was following their monitoring and review processes in accordance with their quality frameworks, which was also borne out in the associated documentation.

2.58 In considering the documentation around the Self-Assessment Report process, the review team is aware that little detail from the higher education Annual Monitoring Reports feeds into the Curriculum Area Self-Assessment Reports and the overall College Self-Assessment Report. Furthermore, senior management confirms that the Higher Education Committee does not have a role in the oversight, monitoring and review of the provision. It is therefore unclear to what extent trends and patterns in higher education can be monitored effectively by senior management, given that the programmes are subsumed

into the, primarily, further education concerns of the area and overall College Self-Assessment Reports. This evaluation supports the recommendation under Expectation B3 that the College ensures that senior managers are able to more fully monitor and review all aspects of higher education provision, including teaching and learning.

2.59 Teaching staff understand their responsibilities in regard to monitoring and review, and highlight the importance of student feedback as the first stage in monitoring higher education provision. The review team noted that there were differing methods of obtaining student input into monitoring between the HND Music Production and FdA in Early Years, including module evaluations and focus groups. However, given the size of the cohorts, the review team agreed that this was proportionate. Students also take part in the Self-Assessment Report Validation Panels.

2.60 Overall, the College's monitoring and review processes are effective and enable appropriate actions to be taken at course and area level. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met. However, senior managers need to monitor and review all aspects of higher education provision more fully, including learning and teaching. Therefore, the team concludes that there is a moderate level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.61 There is a cross-College Complaints and Compliments Policy, with associated procedures such as: a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures; grievance procedures for new College staff; a governance code of conduct and complaints; and the whistleblowing policy and procedure.

2.62 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.63 The review team tested the Expectation by scrutinising policies and documentation. The team also held meetings with support staff, teaching staff and students.

2.64 The Complaints and Compliments Policy clearly outlines procedures for dealing with complaints. The policy is available on the College's intranet and in handbooks, and forms part of the induction procedure. Students the review team met were unaware of a formal complaints procedure, but felt confident that any complaint could be taken to a tutor in the first instance. An example of a complaint from HND Business students concerning their programme was resolved promptly.

2.65 A comprehensive complaints log is maintained, which clearly shows the date complaints are made and completed, although this does not differentiate between further and higher education complaints. There are no outstanding complaints relating to higher education. The College monitors the log annually, and a subsequent report is presented as an agenda item to the College Leadership Team.

2.66 The review team found that the College has effective procedures for handling complaints and appeals, and that these procedures are fair and timely. The team concludes therefore 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

2.67 The College is not empowered as part of its agreements with awarding bodies to delegate any responsibilities for learning opportunities to others.

2.68 For the FdA in Early Years, all students are employed in early year settings. They are assessed through a work-based reflective portfolio. Students are assigned a workplace mentor, and it is the University of Warwick's responsibility to offer training to the mentors. The College appoints a Link Tutor, who visits the students and mentors in the workplace on a termly basis to ensure appropriate support is available, and completes a visit review form.

2.69 Within the HND Music Production and HND Business there are no formal work placements. However, students are encouraged to take up work experience, although this is not directly linked to the curriculum or assessment. Should a student wish to undertake work experience as an extracurricular learning opportunity, additional support is available from Student Services, and appropriate checks and records kept to assure the quality of the experience.

2.70 The review team tested this approach through meeting with teaching staff, students, support staff, and an employer, and by considering documentation, including role descriptions, handbooks, work placement evaluations and awarding body agreements.

2.71 In a number of cases on the HNDs in Music Production and Business, staff from the College had assisted students in finding work experience in the local area, although the review team noted that no formal guidance was offered to these work experience providers. Students on the HND Music Production course highlighted the opportunities for informal work experience arranged by their Programme Leader as particularly positive, including opportunities to be involved in assisting the Shrewsbury Fields Forever festival. These opportunities were also commended by the programme's external examiner.

2.72 Staff from the FdA in Early Years programme were knowledgeable, both about their responsibilities as Link Tutors and their role in supporting students' reflections on applying the theory learnt in College to their work setting. Students and workplace mentors on this programme are content with the support available from the College, although they expressed some confusion around the differentiation of responsibilities between the College and the University of Warwick. Nevertheless, there is extensive guidance for students, Link Tutors and workplace mentors in the University of Warwick's handbook for the programme.

2.73 Based on the solid understanding of College staff of their responsibilities for managing provision with others, and the small scale of this provision, 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

2.74 The College does not offer research degrees, so this Expectation does not apply.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.76 All 10 Expectations are met, nine with a low level of risk and one with a moderate level of risk. Expectation B3 contains a recommendation. There is one example of good practice in Expectation B6, and an affirmation in Expectation B5.

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

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The College website is the main point of information for both prospective students and the public. In addition to the website, there is an intranet, which provides useful programme and general College information for students. There is an overview of higher education programmes within the general Further Education Prospectus. The College also uses social media as a means of communicating information. The College is responsible for information provided to the public and all information to students.

3.2 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing programme handbooks, marketing materials, College policies, the intranet and the website. The team also met staff responsible for information.

3.3 The website provides a useful source of information for prospective students. There is a discrete higher education area on the main opening page, which leads prospective students to information on programmes and how to apply. Students confirm that the website is a useful source of information. A website development project to make the site more accessible is ongoing.

3.4 Programme handbooks are comprehensive, and students confirm they are a useful source of programme and general College information. The intranet is also used by students for information. There is no current minimum content requirement for information uploaded but this will be rectified with the introduction of the updated intranet in September. The College provides all this information at induction. Some HND Music Production students felt that information about units and internal email addresses had not been well communicated, although this has been subsequently rectified by the College.

3.5 Information about higher education is scrutinised by the Higher Education Committee and by the Assistant Principal. Awarding bodies have oversight of information relating to their courses. The website states that FdAs in Early Years and Events Management are offered in partnership with the relevant University, although it does not make clear who awards the qualification. The higher education flyer similarly makes no mention of who awards which qualification.

3.6 There is a clear process for ensuring information is complete and accurate before being uploaded to the website. Programme Leaders review information, which is then checked by the Curriculum Area Leader. The Assistant Principal has ultimate responsibility for information, before sending it for marketing prior to publication. A similar process exists for making in changes to information.

3.7 The review team concludes that the information produced by the College is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Therefore, 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 judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.9 The College is clear about which information it is responsible for and works well with its degree-awarding bodies and Pearson to ensure that any shared responsibilities are carried out. There are precise processes for ensuring that the information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.10 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 The College is committed to enhancing the learning opportunities it offers its students, although, given the small scale of provision, this has been of an informal nature in the past. However, the development of higher education in the College is a clear strategic goal, and the College has taken a number of deliberate steps to progress this. In particular, the establishment of the Higher Education Committee has enabled the College to oversee and develop its provision, and to focus on sharing practice between programmes. Good practice is also shared through informal mechanisms and meetings between staff, who are able to mobilise strong relationships in a small institution.

4.2 The review team found that this approach allowed the Expectation to be met in theory.

4.3 The review team tested this approach to the Expectation by meeting with the Acting Principal, senior staff, teaching staff and students. The team also considered minutes of the Higher Education Committee, College policies and plans, and details about development events.

4.4 Teaching staff articulated the culture of informal support that exists between colleagues delivering programmes. The College highlighted an example of the support offered by the Programme Leader of the HND Music Production to a colleague setting up the HND Business. In addition to informal support, the College has run a higher education specific staff development day, which included the sharing of good practice, and teaching staff reflected on the ways in which the focus of this day, Transformational Teaching in Higher Education, had benefited their teaching practice.

4.5 The Higher Education Strategy and accompanying plan set out a commitment to build on the College's established specialisms and to develop a range of programmes up until September 2016 as part of widening its portfolio. The Higher Education Committee was set up to further oversee this developing offer. One of the Committee's remits is to ensure that the quality of higher education is enhanced consistently. Part of this vision is the development of the National Hotel School; the College has plans to expand its engagement with employers to help deliver this through a series of employers' forums. The Higher Education Committee will also consider the College's draft Enhancement Policy, which will further develop the College's approach to this Expectation.

4.6 The College has sought student views on enhancement and quality more broadly, although there is also a recognition that further work is needed to develop its approach to involving students in enhancement activities and processes. Nevertheless, following these engagements, the College set up a discrete higher education study space in September 2013 as one of a number of deliberate steps to help assure the distinctiveness of higher education in the College. Students highlighted the positive impact of initiatives such as the joint induction for students on the HND Music Production and HND Business courses, and the opportunities within the HND Music Production programme to continue onto a top-up degree programme at the University of Wolverhampton.

4.7 Overall, the review team found that deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities, and that the College is

actively seeking to widen the scope and effectiveness of its enhancement activities.
The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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 College takes deliberate steps at provider level to enhance the learning opportunities of students. This process is identified in the Higher Education Strategy and implemented by senior management, programme teams and the Higher Education Committee. Students' evaluations are used to enhance the provision and, increasingly, employers' views are being taken into account, particularly regarding future developments.

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

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 Both the Strategic Framework and Higher Education Strategy mention the importance of making students well prepared for work. Employability is integrated into the content and learning outcomes of programmes. Staff who teach on HND Music Production programmes are all practitioners, and students are positive about the contribution made by their tutors' links with industry. Students are encouraged to undertake live performances and participate in the local Shrewsbury Fields Forever music festival.

5.2 Students on FdA in Early Years programme are in employment and use their workplace as a sources of learning. HND Business students have the chance to work at a local hotel, and will have the opportunity to shadow the General Manager of the Whitehouse Hotel and help with planning events. Hotel staff give talks to HND Business students on work-related issues, and assignment briefs contain work related tasks, which are commended in external examiner reports.

5.3 Learning resources are sufficient for students to acquire employability skills. There are up-to-date publications and a well equipped music studio. Additional support is available to higher education students, including help with job searches and career advice. This support contributes towards the students' employability status, and students believe that their courses prepare them well for employment.

5.4 The new FdA in Hospitality, due to start in 2016, has had input from employers and will include links with the National Hotel School. Employment requirements inform the units, their rationale and choice of future programme developments.

5.5 Employers do not contribute towards the delivery of the curriculum, other than providing work experience opportunities. However, they do provide a key opportunity for the students to gain valuable industry experience, which helps towards them becoming ready for work; employers acknowledge that programme content is generally fit for purpose. There is no formal mechanism for employers to express their views to the College about programmes.

5.6 The College realises it can build on the work already achieved with employers and their use as an external source of expertise. However, students are positive about contributions made by work placements and guest speakers, and the improved employability skills this gives them.

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 29-32 of the Higher Education Review 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.

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.

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

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.

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.

QAA1198 - R4066 - May 15

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786