Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Newbold College of Higher Education

February 2017

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Newbold College of Higher Education. The review took place from 8 to 10 February 2017 and was conducted by a team of 3 reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Peter Rae (reviewer)
- Mr Ken Chow (reviewer)
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

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

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

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

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

Key findings

Judgements

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies **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**.

- The comprehensive approach used to identify, analyse and meet the learning resource needs of students (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

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

By May 2017:

- ensure that all external examiner reports are accessible to students (Expectation B7).

By September 2017:

- fully comply with awarding body requirements for the approval of assessment briefs (Expectation B6)
- implement and communicate to students suitable support arrangements for complaints and appeals (Expectation B9)
- ensure that the complaints and appeals processes are comprehensive and coherent (Expectation B9).

By January 2018:

- ensure consistency in the articulation, implementation and monitoring of minimum content for the virtual learning environment (Expectation B3).

Affirmation of action being taken

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

- the steps being taken to ensure that the development of new programmes follows a robust and systematic approval process (Expectation B1)
- the steps taken to develop an enhancement policy, and to explicitly embed enhancement in the strategic framework of the College (Enhancement)
- the establishment of a new strategy group with a focus on enhancement that includes staff and governors (Enhancement).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

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

About the provider

Newbold College of Higher Education (the College) was founded in 1901 as Duncombe Hall College. It changed its name to Newbold College in 1961 and later became Newbold College of Higher Education. It is the senior college for, and owned by, the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is a member of the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities. The College is a registered charity and is accredited by the British Accreditation Council. The College's stated ethos is to provide education for the whole person. Its mission is to foster a Christ-centred and diverse learning community that prepares students for service in a changing world.

After a period of validation through CNAA and then OUVS, Theology provision was offered in partnership with, and accredited in 2004 by, the University of Wales Lampeter. It was then revalidated in 2015 by the renamed University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) for the Graduate Diploma in Biblical and Pastoral Studies; BA Hons in Biblical and Pastoral Studies; Postgraduate Certificate in Ministry and Mission; and MA in Theology.

The College has also been affiliated since 1983 with Andrews University (AU), USA, with Washington Adventist University (WAU), USA since 1998, and with Theologische Hochschule Friedensau (THF), Germany since 2012. Together they provide a Licence in Theology, a BA in Theology, a BA Religious Studies, a BA Liberal Arts, a BS in Business Studies, and one-year Certificates in Liberal Arts that include History, English Literature, Performing Arts, Religious Studies and Ancient Languages.

The College is based on an 80-acre site in Bracknell, Berkshire. It provides academic, pastoral and theological education together with business and liberals arts programmes for just under 100 higher education students from some 50 countries. These are taught by 19 full-time and part-time academic staff, supported by 20 professional services staff.

The College was subject to a QAA Review for Educational Oversight review in 2012. This had successful outcomes, with confidence and reliance judgements, three features of good practice (relating to student involvement in college management; responsiveness of library staff; and the effective use of social media for communication), four advisable recommendations (to consider the relationships, responsibilities and terms of reference of academic committees; alignment to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education; development of tutorial guidelines and the relaunch of the College website), and four desirable recommendations (to widen external participation and encourage student attendance at appropriate academic committees; to develop and formalise the peer observation process; formalise identification of staff development needs and develop consistent use of the VLE). The College has built on the areas of good practice, and has competently dealt with the advisable recommendations and three of the four desirable recommendations. There is now a formal virtual learning environment (VLE) Policy, but there is still a lack of consistency across departments with no clear minimum threshold or systematic procedure for monitoring the information contained on the VLE.

Since the last review, a new Principal was appointed in 2014 and the College gained partnership with UWTSD for the validation of its theological programmes in 2015.

It has been a key challenge for the College to increase student numbers during 2016-17, due in part to the inability to apply for student loans until a successful Higher Education

Review outcome is achieved. A new Recruitment, Marketing and Sales team has been appointed but it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the measures put in place. With a small number of staff it continues to be a challenge for the College to prepare documentation for four awarding universities and multiple external bodies and to maintain its Tier 4 visa licence.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   The College's higher education provision is validated by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD/the University) with further provision conferred by three non-UK partner universities: Andrews University (AU), USA; Theologische Hochschule Friedensau (THF), Germany; and Washington Adventist University (WAU), USA. There are collaborative agreements in place with all four degree-awarding bodies that clearly detail the College's responsibilities for maintaining academic standards. Ultimate responsibility for programme approval resides with the respective degree-awarding body, although programme development is a shared endeavour.

1.2   The College adheres to the programme approval and quality assurance processes of its awarding bodies to ensure that appropriate threshold academic standards are secured for its programmes. The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3   The team examined a range of documentation to test how the College secures threshold academic standards for its provision. Documentation included the collaborative

agreements with each of the four awarding bodies, programme handbooks, external examiner reports, the validation report from UWTSD, and annual reviews. The team also met the College Principal, senior teaching and support staff and students.

1.4   UWTSD validates the following programmes: Graduate Diploma in Biblical and Pastoral Studies; BA Hons in Biblical and Pastoral Studies; Postgraduate Certificate in Ministry and Mission; and MA in Theology. Reference to the Subject Benchmark Statement for Theology and Religious Studies is detailed in the programme validation documents for the BA Biblical and Pastoral Studies and MA Theology. The programme validation document for the MA Theology also makes reference to the QAA Master's degree characteristics statement (2010) that was current at the time of validation in September 2015.

1.5   For UWTSD provision, programme learning outcomes are clearly detailed and are agreed by programme teams with formal approval taking place at validation by UWTSD. Programme learning outcomes are differentiated by knowledge and understanding, intellectual and cognitive skills, discipline-specific key skills, and generic key skills. Programme structures, credit requirements and both final and intermediate exit awards are identified along with the appropriate FHEQ level.

1.6   The College applies UK standards to programmes that are offered through Andrews University, Theologische Hochschule Friedensau and Washington Adventist University.

1.7   Both external examiner and annual monitoring reports for the academic year 2015-16 reflect that academic standards are being maintained at appropriate levels and that learning outcomes are being met. The academic standards set for degree awards are also overseen by the respective degree-awarding body.

1.8   The review team considers that the systems, policies and processes the College has in place provide a secure framework for the allocation of qualifications at the appropriate academic level. The team therefore concludes that the College meets the Expectation and that the 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

1.9   The College adheres to the assessment regulations of its degree-awarding bodies governing the award of academic credit and qualifications in accordance with the relevant academic frameworks and quality enhancement policies and procedures.

1.10   The academic regulations and frameworks of the College's degree-awarding bodies who validate and accredit the College's programmes are further supplemented by College policies, systems and procedures for the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of its programmes. The design of policies and procedures allows the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.11   The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of the terms of reference, agendas and minutes of deliberative committees, and the policies and procedures for teaching, learning and assessment. They also met senior and academic staff and students to explore governance arrangements, management responsibilities, the implementation of academic policies and procedures and the application of academic regulations.

1.12   The College has in place a complex academic governance framework, comprising a Board of Governors, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Academic Board. There are several subcommittees of Academic Board, including an Academic Resources Committee (ARC), Academic Quality Assurance Committee (ACQUAC) and Academic Quality Assurance Panels (ACQUAPs). There are detailed terms of reference provided for all constituent committees and the Board of Governors has overall responsibility for institutional oversight, including budgeting and strategy.

1.13   Academic Board is responsible for the management of academic quality, supported by the various programme boards. All Heads of Curriculum Areas and Programme Leaders are ex-officio members of the Academic Board. Minutes of meetings demonstrate that academic quality considerations are discussed at Academic Board. For example, discussion to meet the expectations of the Chapters of the Quality Code through mapping exercises is noted at various meetings.

1.14   The College recently introduced annual reviews of committee effectiveness. The most recent review for the Academic Board conducted in December 2016 noted that the maintenance of College action plans has been a concern. Consequently, a task list on SharePoint has now been implemented to maintain a better overview and tracking of action points.

1.15   For UWTSD-validated provision, the University operates and chairs examination boards to consider marked and moderated work from the College, and to confirm progression and awards. In contrast, for provision accredited by AU, THF, and WAU the College leads on the operation of examination boards with final marks ratified by the respective degree-awarding body.

1.16   The College has an appropriate academic framework and an adequate system of governance in place to secure academic standards. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.17   Definitive programme documentation is maintained by the Records Office with individual programme specifications kept in hard and electronic copy. The College also makes extensive use of module descriptors in preparing students for their studies. Module synopses are contained in the Handbook of Academic Programmes 2016-17. Students are provided with definitive programme information through programme handbooks and the VLE. The College also has a Transcripts Policy in place.

1.18   The team found that the role of the Records Office in maintaining definitive programme information, detailed programme specifications and module descriptors together with information for students provided through the Handbook of Academic Programmes 2016-17 is sufficient to enable the Expectation to be met.

1.19   The team tested this Expectation by viewing programme specifications, student handbooks, the VLE and the College Transcripts Policy. The team also met staff and students.

1.20   Detailed definitive programme information is in place for all programmes delivered by the College. The College has followed UWTSD requirements and use the final version of the Definitive Programme Document, produced for validation, rather than programme specifications. The College is not required to produce programme specifications for the overseas awarding bodies but has constructed them nevertheless and made them available to students. Students are satisfied with the definitive programme information made available to them although in practice there is greater reliance placed on module descriptors.

1.21   The team found that the comprehensive definitive programme information, including the information produced for programmes where it is not required by the awarding body, and the high level of student satisfaction determines that the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.22   As described in paragraphs 1.9 to 1.11 the College holds the primary responsibility for the design, development, and revision of awards, while the awarding bodies carry responsibility for approval and validation, or accreditation, of the programmes. The College has programmes validated by institutions in the UK, the US, and Germany, so the external processes of validation and accreditation vary according to jurisdiction.

1.23   The College has recently updated its Programme Approval Policy, though as yet no programmes have been designed or approved using the policy. The College has not identified its UWTSD provision as 'new awards' since they build on existing awards, and so did not formally follow the full programme approval policy. Programme design and development within the College is carefully structured in the policy, and strategic approval of a new programme, proposed by a curriculum team, is determined at Academic Board, following input from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors. The programme team then develops the full academic programme that is subsequently considered by the ACQUAC, who recommend approval to Academic Board. Approval at this stage is subject to confirmation, first by SLT, and then by the Board of Governors. Finally, the proposed programme is forwarded to the validating University for approval. External engagement with the validating university is not detailed in the Programme Approval Policy, but the programme team describes an iterative process, for revisions and design, that involves the validating or accrediting bodies at multiple points.

1.24   Programme teams engage with UK academic thresholds to ensure that awards align appropriately with the FHEQ and required Subject Benchmark Statements, and are in harmony with validating university protocols and the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), including the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1.25   The College has external members on its Academic Board, and makes use of its external examiners when designing or revising programmes. The awarding universities and PSRBs ensure that there are external members on validating and accrediting panels.

1.26   The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of the College's documentation relating to programme approval, examining, revised programme specifications and submissions to a new validating university. The team also met academic staff, support staff and senior managers, and a University representative. The College follows the relevant regulations of its partner universities. Its UK awards fulfil its responsibilities for programme approval within the framework of the agreement with UWTSD, and are appropriately aligned to the FHEQ and mapped against the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.27   Awards validated and accredited overseas are also designed in line with the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, and meet the relevant frameworks in the respective jurisdictions of the accrediting bodies. Recent programme validations confirm that UWTSD and the College are satisfied that expected standards are being met.

1.28   The College has an appropriate process in place for the approval of new programmes. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met in practice 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

1.29   The College is responsible for setting and marking assessments in accordance with the policies, procedures and regulations of its awarding bodies.

1.30   Academic Board is involved in the maintenance of academic standards through the implementation of a comprehensive process of blind, but not anonymous, moderation and second marking, and the use of external examiners both for UK and for the majority of its international programmes.

1.31   Assessment at the College is supported by clear policies and practices which are aligned to the Quality Code. They are clearly understood by students and staff. Assessment policies are consistently implemented, and external examiner reports are discussed at programme boards. The awarding body confirms that recommendations from external examiners are appropriately actioned.

1.32   The College robustly educates students about good academic practice and has in place comprehensive policies for academic misconduct. A system of extensive student support ensures that there are ample opportunities to work with students in enhancing their understanding of the College's policy, and this has led to a very low incidence of academic malpractice.

1.33   The College's awarding bodies are ultimately responsible for ensuring that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment, and that the maintenance of UK threshold academic standards has been satisfied. The team noted that final year students in the School of Business sit a 'Major Field Test' to ensure that they have achieved the learning outcomes expected of the US-accredited award.

1.34   Learning outcomes and formative assessment information are contained within module specifications, which are available on the College website and through the electronic platform, and are distributed to students in each module. UWTSD modules are scrutinised at validation to ensure that the assessment activity matches the credit value of the unit and are in keeping with the rest of the University's framework. USA and German programmes are submitted to the accrediting body, and scrutinised during regular institutional audits, the most recent of which took place in December 2015.

1.35   All programmes have an assessment strategy which is detailed in module descriptors and programme specifications. All programmes have a transparent marking process, and assessments are internally verified.

1.36   The College is responsible for setting, marking and moderating assignments in compliance with the University's assessment regulations. All assessment is subjected to cross-setting within the institution. All examinations must be approved in advance by an

external examiner, but other assessment briefs are not currently approved externally prior to receipt by students. Assurance of academic standards is checked post assessment. All work is first-marked and where appropriate second-marked. All assessed student work is internally moderated. Assignments are marked with full regard to relevant published grading criteria.

1.37 External examiners are responsible for the external moderation of student submissions as well as approving marks at assessment boards. They confirm that the standards set are being maintained and are comparable to similar programmes run by other providers. External examiner comments are included in reports that are discussed in programme boards and presented to Academic Board.

1.38 The College and its awarding bodies have partnership agreements that are supported by a management structure and processes to enable oversight of the higher education provision. This would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.39 The team considered the effectiveness of the approach to the award of credit and qualifications by examining relevant College policies, regulations and procedures, and documents. The team also met academic staff, students, professional support staff and senior staff to discuss the effectiveness of the procedures in place. Assessment is designed to ensure that programme learning outcomes can be met.

1.40 Programme specifications and module descriptors demonstrate that each qualification is allocated to the relevant level of the FHEQ, and the University validation or accreditation processes ensure that the level and volume of study are appropriate. Staff and students demonstrate a clear understanding of, and engagement with, the assessment regulations, policies and requirements to achieve credit. There is a clear understanding of the key role that assessment plays in the demonstration of learning outcomes. Students confirmed that the academic credit of individual modules and intended learning outcomes is clearly communicated to them by faculty staff at induction, at the start of each module, and also through the programme handbooks, which are available online. They understand what is expected of them to achieve the requisite learning outcomes and are familiar with the range of assessment strategies identified within programme handbooks.

1.41 The operation of assessment boards for UK awards is clearly articulated within the awarding body's definitive documentation. They are chaired by the University and attended by University and College faculty and external examiners. Boards for non-UK awards are operated internally, chaired by a member of the College staff, and follow a clearly defined procedure, but do not normally have an external examiner present as this is not required by the awarding bodies. External examiners are responsible for the external moderation of student submissions as well as approving marks that are considered at assessment boards. They confirm that the standards set are being maintained and are comparable with similar programmes run by other providers, reported through programme boards and to the College's Academic Board.

1.42 The College has developed appropriate mechanisms with its awarding bodies for the award of credit and qualifications. In order to ensure that threshold standards are met, the decisions to award credit or qualifications are based on robust evidence which demonstrates that learning outcomes at both module and programme levels have been achieved.

1.43 The team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the corresponding 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

1.44   The College undertakes both internal and external programme monitoring and review. It complies with the annual programme review requirements of its UK awarding body. The annual programme reviews (APRs) for UWTSD were prepared, approved, and submitted for the first time in July 2016. These reviews were completed by the respective Programme Leaders, then approved by the Department of Theological Studies Course Board. Feedback on the report is provided by UWTSD in the spring following submission.

1.45   Internal monitoring has been largely separate to the APR process. A six-stage annual monitoring process is currently undertaken by the College for its internal monitoring. It begins with a process of departmental accountability then is reported through ACQUAPs, which feeds in to a system of central scrutiny, overseen by ACQUAC. Here, an overall summary report is prepared for the Academic Board, and recommendations and action plans sent back to the 'reporting areas' for implementation, a process that lasts, in total, nine months.

1.46   The most recent monitoring reports reference and draw upon the UWTSD APR, and it is the College's intention that the internal and external processes are more closely aligned. The newly adopted Quality Code Benchmarking and Academic Annual Monitoring Process does not explicitly mention validating bodies, but staff are clear that the new process will build upon the data submitted for the UWTSD APR.

1.47   A wide range of evidence is used in the preparation of the internal annual monitoring report, including student feedback, statistical data, external examiner reports, engagement with external agencies, minutes of assessment boards and programme boards. The annual monitoring action plan is reviewed and adopted by the Academic Board, which is also responsible for tracking progress against action plans. These action plans now form an appendix to each set of Academic Board minutes.

1.48   External examiners monitor academic standards on individual modules and programmes by sampling student work and, for UK awards, through attendance at assessment boards. External examiner reports for non-UK programmes are submitted to the College, and distributed to Programme Leaders, who take them to programme boards for response and action. External examiner reports for UWTSD programmes are submitted to the University, which monitors them prior to subsequent transmission to the College. The programme board is responsible for discussing and approving the response to an external examiner's report, which is then composed by the Programme Leader. The report is sent to the external examiner and the Academic Board, copied to the University, and responses are detailed in the APR. Issues arising from external examiners' reports are formulated into an action plan monitored by the Academic Board, and revised by UWTSD through the APR process. External examiner reports for non-UK awards are responded to in similar ways, and are reported to the non-UK bodies but lack the iterative process with the awarding body.

1.49   Periodic review is the responsibility of the validating university and, with UWTSD, is conducted as part of the review cycle leading to the revalidation of individual programmes.

Membership of review events includes external representation and student participation. The process assures both the College and the University that threshold standards are being met. The College indicates that reviews by its international partners are not held regularly, and can be spasmodic. However, the College was reviewed in 2014 by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, and course audits take place regularly. Outcomes from engagement with external accrediting agencies result in action plans which are monitored and reviewed by those bodies.

1.50   The policies and procedures in place for programme monitoring and review are designed to ensure that academic standards are aligned with those of the awarding body and with UK threshold standards. These policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.51   The review team tested the approach to monitoring and review by meeting staff, employers, students, and a University representative, and by analysing documentation, such as validation papers, governance papers, committee minutes, action plans and academic oversight structures.

1.52   Annual monitoring complies with the requirements of the awarding bodies and ensures that the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and maintained. The arrangements are understood and followed by College staff.

1.53   The College, with the support of UWTSD, has the appropriate policies in place for ongoing monitoring and review of programmes, and is applying them appropriately. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that 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

1.54   The College's principal source of external and independent expertise in maintaining academic standards are the external examiners. UWTSD appoints and approves external examiners for programmes it validates. There is no formal requirement to have external examiners for US and German degree programmes. However, the College applies UK guidelines to all its provision, although not all programmes have external examiners. For non-UK provision, external examiners are appointed and approved by the College. The roles and responsibilities of external examiners are detailed in both UWTSD and College guidance.

1.55   The validation of programmes by UWTSD requires the involvement of independent external subject advisers that are approved by the University to provide insight into the design and approval of modules, programmes and qualifications.

1.56   The College's processes for the use of external examiners would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.57   The team tested this Expectation by considering the procedures for, and reports from, programme validation and external examiners. The team also held discussions with senior and academic staff.

1.58   The College places reliance primarily on external examiners for the ongoing oversight of threshold academic standards. External examiners provide annual reports that comment on whether academic standards have successfully been achieved and maintained by the College. They also receive samples of student work from selected modules.

1.59   External examiner reports are considered at programme boards and formal responses are provided by the respective Programme Leader that detail actions taken in response to the report. UWTSD confirms the adequacy of the College's response to the external examiner reports and that any actions are sufficiently addressed.

1.60   The external examiner reports and associated response feed into the College's annual programme evaluation process assuring the oversight and maintenance of academic standards.

1.61   The review team concludes that Expectation A3.4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.62   In reaching its judgement about the College's maintenance of academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its awarding bodies, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.63   All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met.

1.64   The College, in partnership with its awarding bodies, takes due regard of the awarding bodies' regulations, and is effective in maintaining the academic standards of its programmes. It adheres to the programme approval and quality assurance processes of its awarding bodies to ensure that appropriate threshold academic standards are secured.

1.65   UWTSD validates the Graduate Diploma in Biblical and Pastoral Studies; BA Hons in Biblical and Pastoral Studies; Postgraduate Certificate in Ministry and Mission; and MA in Theology. Partners in America and Germany confer a Licence in Theology, a BA in Theology, a BA in Religious Studies, a BA in Liberal Arts, a BS in Business Studies, and one-year Certificates in Liberal Arts.

1.66   UWTSD operates and chairs examination boards to consider marked and moderated work from the College, and to confirm progression and awards. In contrast, the College leads on the operation of examination boards for the provision accredited by AU, THF, and WAU, with final marks ratified by the respective degree-awarding body.

1.67   The College has in place a complex academic governance framework with detailed terms of reference for all constituent committees. The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for institutional oversight, including budgeting and strategy.

1.68   Assessment at the College is supported by clear policies and practices which are aligned to the Quality Code. They are clearly understood by students and staff, and are contained within programme specifications and module descriptors. External examiners are responsible for the external moderation of student submissions as well as approving marks at assessment boards. Comments from their reports are discussed in programme boards and College responses are presented to Academic Board.

1.69   A six-stage internal annual monitoring process is currently undertaken by the College that begins with departmental accountability and reports through ACQUAPs, and is overseen by ACQUAC. Reports reference and draw upon the UWTSD APR, and it is the College's intention to more closely align the internal and external processes. Staff are clear that the newly-adopted Quality Code Benchmarking and Academic Annual Monitoring Process will build upon the data submitted for the UWTSD APR.

1.70   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.

2   Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*

Findings

2.1   Programme design and development within the College is initiated by curriculum area committees that include student representation. Proposals must first gain 'strategic approval' from the SLT, the Strategic Planning Group of the Board of Governors, the Librarian, and ACQUAC. The comments from these bodies are submitted, along with the business case and marketing case, to the Academic Board, for strategic approval.

2.2   Following strategic approval, the curriculum area develops a full academic proposal, consulting with students and involving external expertise. This is then considered by ACQUAC and, if approved, is considered for adoption by the Academic Board, subject to the approval of the Board of Governors. From there it is presented to the relevant validating or accrediting body.

2.3   The College notes the complexity of the process, but is confident that the checks and balances are in place to ensure new programmes are adequately considered from every perspective before being launched. The design of these policies and processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.4   The team reviewed the minutes of relevant committees, including those of the Academic Board and programme boards, and examined documentation related to programme approval. The team also met a range of academic staff, professional support staff, senior managers, and students.

2.5   The College has not submitted a new programme since the introduction of the new policy. Three programmes have been validated in that time by UWTSD, but the College considers this to be a new validation of existing programmes, since the amount of change has not reached the 25 per cent threshold noted in the policy. The team **affirms** the steps being taken to ensure that the development of new programmes follows a robust and systematic approval process.

2.6   In the validation process, the programme team engages with UK academic thresholds to ensure that awards align appropriately with required academic standards and are in harmony with the awarding body's protocols and the requirements of the PSRB (MinTAC). The College is aware of, and engages with, appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements.

2.7   The College follows University policies and procedures as they relate to programme approval. The Approval Policy mandates extensive and vigorous internal discussion of the development of new programmes by College academic staff, and the College exercises close oversight of the development of new provision.

2.8   The College has adopted a rigorous and effective policy for programme design and approval, and this is underpinned by clear understanding of approval protocols at its validating and accrediting universities. Therefore, the team concludes that the College meets the Expectation 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

2.9   The College outlines admissions regulations in its Handbook of Academic Programmes. These include detailed entry requirements, including for provision delivered in partnership with the College's overseas awarding bodies that incorporate explicit English language requirements. Applicants can access the Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants if they are unhappy with the College's decision.

2.10   The College uses the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) guidelines to help develop and articulate minimum requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate admission based on qualifications gained in other countries. The Administrative Officer (Admissions) is responsible for ensuring applications meet the entry criteria.

2.11   The College operates a 'Visit Us Programme' which provides prospective students the opportunity to meet teaching, admissions and finance staff. There is a 50 per cent conversion rate among prospective students who attend this event.

2.12   The clear regulatory framework set out in the Handbook of Academic Programmes, the defined role of the Administrative Officer (Admissions) in scrutinising and overseeing applications and the use of external benchmarks would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.13   The team tested this Expectation by viewing the College's Handbook of Academic Programmes, the College website and the Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants. The team also studied marketing material, the induction programme and met with students and staff.

2.14   Students informed the team that they felt well supported through the application process. Information was clear and timely, and enabled them to make a well-informed decision about where to study. Students also reported this information as an accurate reflection of the experience they received on their programmes.

2.15   The College has a clear process for handling applications for accreditation of prior learning (APL) for students on programmes validated by their overseas partners. The Administrative Officer (Admissions) and Senior Administrative Officer consider applications and liaise with academic staff and the Academic Registrar in order to make decisions. For UWTSD provision the University handles APL applications directly.

2.16   Staff support is in place for those involved in recruitment and admissions. New staff shadow more experienced colleagues and there is the opportunity to attend external briefing events including those delivered by NARIC.

2.17   As noted under Expectation B9, staff are unaware of the overlap between the Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants and the College Academic Complaints Policy. Prospective students are able to complain through both policies which contain different

processes and therefore presents the possibility for confusion and inconsistency in the way they are handled.

2.18   The team concludes that the detailed and comprehensive information for applicants, clear staff responsibilities, continuing professional development for staff involved in recruitment and admissions, and high levels of student satisfaction allows this Expectation to be met with a low level of risk.

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

2.19   The College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Statement articulates the strategic approach to learning and teaching and is informed by Chapters B3 and B6 of the Quality Code. The statement sets out the College's commitment to 'provide high quality, creative and challenging learning opportunities that enable students from a very wide range of backgrounds and nationalities to achieve their full potential'. It includes, in broad terms, objectives to focus the College's attention within the context of learning opportunities, teaching and assessment.

2.20   Academic Board is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the College's strategic approach to learning and teaching throughout the different subject areas. The annual monitoring process requires subject areas to seek feedback, both from students and teaching staff, and to develop and implement appropriate action plans.

2.21   Learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection and evaluation of professional practice through annual monitoring, staff appraisal and peer observation.

2.22   The College has policies and procedures in place that would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.23   The review team tested the effectiveness of teaching and learning by examining a range of evidence provided by the College, including strategic documents and policies. The team also had discussions with senior staff, academic and professional staff, students and employers.

2.24   All teaching staff are appropriately qualified with Master's and/or Doctoral degrees and a range of relevant work experience. Staff qualifications are checked by the degree-awarding bodies who validate and accredit the College's programmes. The approval of staff to teach on a UWTSD programme forms part of the validation with any new appointments subsequently submitted to the University for approval.

2.25   For non-UK provision, teaching staff must submit evidence of their qualifications to the respective accrediting university. New teaching staff attend an induction within their particular subject area and are assigned a mentor who provides support and guidance during the initial period of the lecturer's appointment. The role of mentors and induction process are outlined in the College's Academic Staff Appointment and Mentoring Policy. Teaching staff confirm that they receive an annual appraisal that is facilitated by their Head of Department.

2.26   The College's Peer Observation and Review Policy outlines the process for peer observation of the delivery of learning and teaching. Its purpose is to evaluate teaching standards and set expectations while identifying developmental action points for lecturers and the sharing of good practice. Outcomes are recorded on standardised peer observation

of teaching forms with evaluative comments, a summary of positive features of the session and areas for feedback. The lecturers' response to observation feedback is also integrated within the form.

2.27   The team scrutinised sample peer observation records and met teaching staff who confirmed that there are clear and effective mechanisms in place that enable teaching staff to reflect on their practice and consider how it might be changed and improved.

2.28   The College is committed to the continuing development of learning and teaching practice and this ethos is underpinned by a detailed Staff Professional Development Policy, which articulates the College's commitment to support and develop academic staff. Funding is available to support staff development with each member of staff receiving a dedicated funding allocation. In addition, discussions have taken place with UWTSD for College staff to apply for Higher Education Academy Fellowship through the University's accredited scheme.

2.29   The team noted the centralised register of staff professional development activities that is maintained by the College and examined completed appraisals and staff CVs. These were discussed in meetings with teaching staff and confirm that staff are engaged in a wide range of developmental activities, including research, further study, and attendance at subject-specific seminars and conferences.

2.30   In the Department of Theological Studies there is an expectation that staff should be engaged in subject-specific scholarship and research, and staff are proactive in these areas. However, the review team was informed that staff time spent on research was not explicitly considered in staff loadings. This has led to the development of a draft Staff Research Policy that has been initially considered by Academic Board with the view that the policy should become a College-wide policy.

2.31   The College evaluates the quality of learning and teaching through various channels, including a module evaluation form, and an analysis that is integrated within the annual monitoring process. The comprehensive student evaluation and feedback process describes how the College engages with student feedback and takes appropriate actions through both formal and informal mechanisms.

2.32   Students praised the professional approach of lecturers and valued their academic and practical experience that feeds into the curriculum. Lecturers make themselves available to provide advice and support. However, students stated that their experience of contract and visiting lecturers was not always comparable to more permanent College staff.

2.33   The College's VLE is used to host learning materials for individual modules, including reading lists and information about formative and summative assessments. The VLE Policy does not detail the minimum expectations for the content of learning resources or materials on department VLE sites for modules. Instead, it outlines the roles and responsibilities of different users of the VLE and clarifies that lecturers are responsible for populating the VLE for modules they teach, ensuring that materials remain up-to-date, and that resources for a module reflect the relevant section of the Programme Specification.

2.34   Programmes within the Department of Theological Studies have detailed information and learning materials on the VLE. However, students from the School of Business commented on the lack of materials on the VLE for the modules that they are studying, particularly where modules are taught by contract and visiting lecturers. This inconsistency in the approach to the use of the VLE reduces the parity of experience for students.

2.35   The College's consistent use of the VLE across all of its provision was a desirable recommendation from its Review of Educational Oversight in December 2012. Despite a

formal VLE Policy, there is a lack of consistency in the content of learning resources/materials on VLE sites across departments, with no clear minimum threshold articulated, and no systematic procedure in place to monitor the information contained on the VLE. The review team therefore **recommends** the College ensure consistency in the articulation, implementation and monitoring of minimum content for the virtual learning environment.

2.36   The College does not currently offer any full programmes through distance learning, but is continuing to develop online material for the VLE to support existing programmes. This has resulted in several students taking modules through blended delivery. At the College, blended learning operates as a mode of attendance, where students attend the classroom virtually using synchronous videoconferencing software. This enables students to engage with discussions and be 'present' when personal circumstances make physical attendance on campus challenging. Students currently engaged in blended delivery create and agree an individual timetable with their lecturer to determine when they need to be on-campus, although there is a requirement to attend a minimum of 25 per cent of each module, in person, on campus.

2.37   There is clear evidence of well-defined policies and processes that underpin the College's structured approach to reviewing and enhancing the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices. The review team concludes that Expectation B3 is met and that 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

2.38   The College's Strategic Plan sets out key priorities to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The College's priorities are to 'provide high-quality, creative and challenging learning opportunities' and 'nurture and support students throughout their learning experiences'. These priorities are accompanied by a series of more specific objectives with identified accountabilities and timescales.

2.39   The Academic Resources Committee is responsible for the strategy, budgeting and management of academic resources, including library and IT provision, and acts as a subcommittee of the Academic Board.

2.40   The learning environment for students includes a range of physical, virtual fieldwork and placement settings. Responsibility for maintaining the physical learning environment at the College resides with the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Campus and Estate Services. The College's Strategic Plan details a priority to modernise at least two learning and teaching spaces per year and there has been recent refurbishment to classrooms within the School of Business to create a physical learning environment that resembles an executive-type setting.

2.41   These arrangements would allow Expectation B4 to be met.

2.42   The review team considered the College's strategic plan, its support policies and a range of physical and human resource structures to determine its overall approach to student development and achievement. The review team also read minutes from relevant committees, validation and accreditation reports, and met staff and students.

2.43   All students undergo an induction programme, with a general orientation and a more specific induction through Curriculum Area Heads where students are introduced to College processes and the programme they are studying. Students are allocated a Personal Tutor and there is a clear framework that defines the nature and provision of different forms of tutorial support within the College's Tutorial and Personal Development Planning Policy. This includes details on the role and responsibilities of Personal Tutors and guidance on the number and timing of individual and group tutorial sessions. Details of discussions and a log of personal tutorial meetings are formally documented.

2.44   Students are satisfied with the tutorial support and developmental feedback provided by lecturers and professional staff that enables them to improve their academic writing skills. New students are required to undertake a formative Study Skills module in their first semester. Seminars cover such areas as library support, the VLE, essay writing and research methods. Students are also required to keep a Personal Development Portfolio to encourage identification of personal and academic needs, reflect on experiences and record achievements.

2.45   The College's Equality Policy sets out the responsibilities of students and staff in maintaining an inclusive learning environment that is committed to the values of equality and diversity. There are appropriate student support mechanisms for those who have a disability or learning difficulty that is overseen by the College's Learning Support Coordinator. Teaching staff have also received training in supporting students with dyslexia.

2.46   All curriculum areas publish programme handbooks that present clear information on the structure of programmes, assessment requirements and grading criteria.

2.47   Careers education, information, advice and guidance are supported by inviting employers to the College to give interviews and careers information, which familiarises students with career opportunities in their fields.

2.48   Students within the Department of Theological Studies benefit from field excursions, which offer them an invaluable opportunity to experience pastoral and evangelistic work first-hand. Student placements form an integral part of undergraduate theology programmes and facilitate the development of students' knowledge and skills within a professional setting. Guidance for students in the field ministry placement is underpinned in a detailed Placement Handbook. In the School of Business, students have benefited from trips to organisations including Hewlett Packard and J P Morgan.

2.49   The Roy Graham Library is the main academic resource centre on campus. It holds approximately 62,000 items, 80 print periodical subscriptions and has access to 7,000 periodical titles in electronic form. Students studying on AU and WAU programmes are able to access their resources electronically. UWTSD students have no access to the University library, although access to electronic resources is currently being explored. The Library surveys conducted for 2015 and 2016 indicate that students are satisfied and that the availability of and access to learning resources is good.

2.50   An integral part of the Library service are workshops and one-to-one training sessions, designed to introduce students to library resources and services. The development of services and activities that the Library provides is articulated in its strategic plan for 2016-19. A rigorous annual evaluation covers a wide range of areas and actions are identified and taken forward. The comprehensive approach used to identify, analyse and meet the learning resource needs of students is **good practice**.

2.51   Resource requirements are taken into account when developing a new initiative through consultation between academic staff and the Librarian. The Library has a budget to fund the acquisition of new learning resources that is split between departments and each department decides how to spend funding.

2.52   Programmes are annually monitored and produce a comprehensive Annual Programme Evaluation at curriculum level using a defined College template. This incorporates analysis and commentary on various statistics, including progression, retention and final classification data. It also includes scope for reflection on issues arising from student evaluation relating to teaching quality, learning resources and student support and guidance.

2.53   Student feedback informs the monitoring and evaluation of arrangements and resources that are in place to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Students confirm that, in general, they are satisfied with the access to and availability of learning resources, particularly the library's book stock and access to electronic resources.

2.54   The review team concludes that arrangements and resources are in place, monitored and evaluated by the College in order to effectively take account of the diverse needs of students. The Expectation is therefore met and the 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

2.55   A Student Evaluation and Feedback Process is in place which details the College's ethos in relation to student engagement and centres on the process for gathering module and programme feedback. This is further articulated in the College's Student Members of Committees and Boards Policy, which demonstrates that students are represented at programme meetings and major College committees, including Academic Board.

2.56   The clear policy framework for student engagement, programme-level initiatives and structured opportunities for students to engage in College-level decision-making are sufficient to enable Expectation B5 to be met.

2.57   The team tested the Expectation by scrutinising the Student Members of Committees and Boards Policy and the Student Evaluation and Feedback Process. The team also viewed committee minutes and met with staff, students and student representatives.

2.58   Student representatives at programme level are elected in class and training is delivered by the Academic Registrar on a one-to-one or small group basis. The Newbold Students Association elects students to its Executive Committee and these representatives are appointed to more senior committees such as Academic Board. Student representatives report that they feel equipped to undertake their roles.

2.59   Examples of changes made in response to student feedback include: investment in core texts; increased industry exposure for business students in the form of international trips; and alterations to scheduled teaching times of more complex modules to provide students with the best possible learning environment. A new pilot has also been introduced to provide timely communication through text messages about activities provided by support services.

2.60   The team determined that there is a patent commitment to student engagement and a widely held ethos which views students, very purposefully, as full members of committees rather than representatives. The team also found that students are widely represented on committees and that they believe their views are listened to and acted upon.

2.61   Consequently, the team concludes that Expectation B5 is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.62   The College has adopted the regulations, policies and practices of its primary awarding body (UWTSD) in assessing all students, including those on non-UK awards. An internal Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Statement provides staff with general guidance on the setting and moderation of assessments and provision of feedback to students. A Formative and Summative Assessment Policy provides guidance in determining assessment patterns. The University monitors the College policy and practice for UK awards through University-operated assessment boards, scrutiny of external examiner reports, receipt of Annual Programme Reviews, and through the periodic review process.

2.63   All student work is first-marked and, where appropriate, second-marked or moderated prior to scrutiny by the external examiner. There is an internal approval system for assignment briefs and examinations. Assignments briefs are not currently submitted to the external examiner for external moderation, which is inconsistent with UWTSD policy, though examinations are scrutinised by the eternal examiner. The team **recommends** that the College fully comply with awarding body requirements for the approval of assessment briefs.

2.64   Policies for dealing with plagiarism and other academic misconduct are articulated in the College's Academic Honesty Policy, incorporated into programme handbooks and available on the website. Students are informed about plagiarism during induction processes.

2.65   The College applies a generic set of assessment criteria differentiated between undergraduate and postgraduate provision. These are made explicit in course handbooks, and information on assessment criteria is also provided on the VLE. Samples of assessed work are blind second-marked prior to scrutiny by the external examiner. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.66   The review team tested the effectiveness of the approach and procedures relating to assessment by scrutinising awarding body regulations, programme handbooks, Assessment Board terms of reference and arrangements, minutes of Examination Board meetings, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Statement, the Formative and Summative Assessment Policy, the Assessment Equivalence Guidelines, external examiner reports and the APL policies.

2.67   The team also held meetings with teaching staff, including a University representative, professional support staff, employers and students, and viewed content within the College's online platforms.

2.68   The College's policies and procedures, which are aligned to the Quality Code, are effective in practice. They are considered within the framework of the academic regulations of the College's awarding bodies and ensure that effective assessment strategies allow students to demonstrate competence to meet the intended learning outcomes of their programmes of study. The College operates equitable, valid and reliable processes of

assessment, which are closely monitored by external examiners who ensure that assessments are being set at the appropriate level. Programme assessment boards for UK awards meet regularly, and membership includes senior College staff, University representatives, and external examiners.

2.69   The College's regulations, programme handbooks, and assessment policies are available to staff and students on the College's intranet and website, and include information relating to admissions criteria and extenuating circumstances. Students confirm that they are familiar with these policies and understand, for example, the assessment criteria for course work, and the avenues for academic support.

2.70   Assessment criteria are contained within programme handbooks and module outlines. Students are familiar with these and with the range of formative and summative assessment strategies they provide. Students confirm that they are made fully aware of assessment tasks, understand what is required of them, and find the differentiated assessment criteria appropriately challenging. Students commented that the College is inconsistent in meeting its own timeframe of a three-week turnaround to return marked work.

2.71   There is a coherent process for internal moderation and cross-marking, which helps to ensure the quality of marking and feedback within individual modules. Module leaders assess course work, which is automatically cross-marked by another member of the department, appointed by the programme board. Work at Levels 5, 6, and 7 is then scrutinised by an external examiner.

2.72   There are clear processes for students with additional learning needs, and reasonable adjustments recommended for assignments enable learning outcomes to be appropriately tested. The College takes into account the varying academic abilities of students, and there are processes to support weaker students, such as the delivery of Study Skills workshops.

2.73   The College procedures for the accreditation of prior learning (APL) of students are based on the regulations of the awarding bodies. For UK awards the College adheres to the principles laid out by the validating University, which include consideration of the relevant chapter of the Quality Code; applications are submitted directly to the University for approval. On non-UK programmes, approval is considered first by admissions staff then forwarded to subject area specialists for decisions. The College admits students who fulfil the APL criteria and there is a detailed and considered approach to the admission of students.

2.74   Policies for dealing with plagiarism and other academic misconduct are made clear to students in programme handbooks and during the induction week.

2.75   Processes for considering extenuating circumstances for all programmes are being brought into alignment with the requirements of the UK awarding body. All students on UWTSD programmes have requests for extenuating circumstances forwarded to the University. Students studying with non-UK awarding bodies, apply to an internal committee which follows the same conventions. Assessment Board minutes confirm that students have achieved the standards set for the award of credit and qualifications.

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

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.77   External examiners for UWTSD-validated provision are appointed and approved by the University who define their role and remit in full written guidance. All attend an induction session and they submit annual reports following a standard University template.

2.78   The College has adopted UK standards and appoints and approves external examiners for programmes that are accredited by US and German degree-awarding bodies. External examiners are involved in the College's non-UK provision to ensure that assessment processes and outcomes are consistent. This is underpinned by the College's detailed External Examining Policy that articulates the role and responsibilities of external examiners, procedures for their appointment and associated appointment criteria. Not all programmes have external examiners, but this is not a formal requirement for non-UK degree-awarding bodies. External examiners for non-UK provision produce and submit annual reports on a College-designed template.

2.79   The policies and procedures of the College allow Expectation B7 to be met.

2.80   The review team tested the rigour of the College's approach to external examining by scrutinising external examiner reports and responses, reviewing relevant documentation, and meeting staff and students.

2.81   As outlined in paragraph 2.63, external examiners receive, comment on, and approve examination questions and changes are made by the College in response to feedback. However, assignment briefs are not currently submitted to external examiners for scrutiny, which is inconsistent with UWTSD policy.

2.82   Annual reports from external examiners are initially discussed at the respective programme board with a written response to the external examiner prepared by the Programme Leader indicating any changes to be implemented in response to the report. UWTSD confirms that the College's response to external examiners' reports is satisfactory and that any actions have been appropriately resolved.

2.83   External examiner reports clarify that 'first and second marking processes were clear and rigorous through the samples provided and that feedback on examination questions sent in advance had been acted upon'. Concerns regarding student performance and the high failure rate in Greek and Hebrew examinations for the academic year 2015-16 have been addressed by a programme modification to introduce summative weekly language tests and replace mid-term examinations.

2.84   External examiner reports and responses are integrated into the College's Annual Programme Evaluation for all programmes.

2.85   Current external examiner reports indicate that there is satisfaction that the assessment processes at the College are appropriate and consistent for individual programmes and for the level of component modules. Academic standards are set appropriately and are being maintained in relation to FHEQ level descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements.

2.86   The College states that external examiners' annual reports are published on the VLE through departmental webpages and that a link is provided in the respective

programme handbooks. However, students were not aware how to access external examiner reports and the team was unable to find the reports in the stated places. The team therefore **recommends** that the College ensure that all external examiner reports are accessible to students.

2.87   The team finds that the College makes scrupulous use of external examiners and has effective procedures for using and acting on external examiner reports. The Expectation is therefore 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

2.88   The College's UK programmes are subject to the annual monitoring and periodic review processes of UWTSD. Revalidation is quinquennial and follows the process outlined in the University's Validation Handbook. When programmes are due for periodic review or revalidation, external examiners and other external subject specialists are consulted as part of the preparation process. Review processes for non-UK awarding bodies vary in nature and regularity, and can be spasmodic.

2.89   Annual monitoring of UWTSD programmes requires the College to complete a University template for each programme APR, together with an action plan relating to the previous academic year. This includes any outstanding actions to be taken in response to external examiner reports. In preparing the report, evidence is drawn from a range of reference points including external examiner comments and student feedback surveys.

2.90   In addition to the APR required by UWTSD, the College has its own comprehensive, internal, six-stage annual monitoring process. It begins with departmental accountability and reports through ACQUAPs, which feeds into a system of central scrutiny, overseen by ACQUAC. Here, an overall summary report is prepared for the Academic Board and recommendations and action plans are returned to the 'reporting areas' for implementation. The process takes a total of nine months.

2.91   The most recent monitoring reports reference and draw upon the UWTSD APR, and it is the College's intention that the internal and external processes be more closely aligned. The newly-adopted Quality Code Benchmarking and Academic Annual Monitoring Process does not explicitly mention validating bodies, but staff are clear that the new process will build on the data submitted for the UWTSD Annual Programme Review.

2.92   The current Annual Programme Evaluation (APE) incorporates rigorous analysis and commentary on progression, retention and final classification data. It also considers student feedback, external examiner reports, engagement with external agencies, minutes of assessment boards and programme boards, and plans for the enhancement of the programme. The annual monitoring action plan is reviewed and adopted by the Academic Board, which tracks progress against action plans, which now form an appendix to each set of Academic Board minutes. The 2014-15 APEs are detailed documents and incorporate positive feedback on teaching quality from student satisfaction questionnaires.

2.93   The College has a comprehensive student evaluation and feedback process that engages with student feedback through both formal student evaluation forms and informal mechanisms. There is no formal process to report results to students, but students' representatives on course boards receive a report on any issues that are identified and the measures taken to resolve them.

2.94   The College follows the University's processes for programme monitoring and review, and supplements these with a range of internal review processes. This framework would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.95   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's arrangements for programme monitoring and review by examining relevant documentation, and in meetings with students, professional support staff, academic staff, senior staff and a representative from the University. Overall, the processes for programme monitoring and review work well, and proposed revisions will ensure that the internal and external review processes are more closely aligned.

2.96   The periodic review of the validated provision remains the responsibility of the University and the College complies with their requirements. Academic Board is accountable to the Board of Governors through the SLT for the planning, development and operation of the academic work of the College. The annual monitoring cycles and regulatory processes are adhered to, as set out in the partnership arrangements.

2.97   The College has in place a range of opportunities to engage with students, which feeds into the monitoring and review of quality and standards. These include consideration of module feedback forms, programme surveys and formal representation throughout the College's committee structure and validation boards.

2.98   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 (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

2.99   The College's Academic Complaints Policy details the arrangements for handling complaints for all awarding partners. At present there is no formal system of support for students submitting a complaint or appeal. Completion of proceedings letters are not currently issued to students when the College's internal process comes to an end. The College also acknowledges that the policies should more explicitly reference the role of the awarding body in relation to complaints and appeals.

2.100   The College has an Appeals Policy in place for students studying on non-UK programmes. Students must submit any appeal directly to the University and this is clear in documentation. Initial appeals are considered by the programme team and any further appeal by the Academic Registrar.

2.101   Notwithstanding limitations in the College's framework for complaints, the team found that the presence of an Academic Complaints Policy, Appeals Policy and Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants, when combined with the role of the awarding partners in considering complaints and appeals, and information available for students through their handbooks are sufficient to enable Expectation B9 to be met.

2.102   The team tested the Expectation by viewing the Appeals Policy, Academic Complaints Policy and Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants. The team also met students and staff and scrutinised the minutes of College committees, including Academic Board.

2.103   While the College has a complaints policy in place and clearly promotes the early resolution of student concerns and complaints, the advice and guidance available for students to make an appeal or complaint is not clear or accurate. Information pertaining to the role of the awarding bodies and, for UK provision, the role of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator is inaccessible. The Complaints Policy was due for review in August 2016 but at the time of this review the College had yet to evaluate the effectiveness of their appeals and complaints procedures.

2.104   Staff have a limited and inaccurate understanding of the Academic Complaints Policy and no guidance or training has been offered to the broad group of staff who are able to handle informal complaints. Students are satisfied that their concerns are addressed but they are not clear about the process for submitting a complaint and there are no specified support arrangements for students who submit a complaint or appeal. This was confirmed by staff. The team therefore **recommends** that the College implement and communicate to students suitable support arrangements for complaints and appeals.

2.105   The team was provided with an example of an appeal submitted by a student on a UWTSD programme which was adjudged by the College to be a complaint. The matter was first discussed at Academic Board and irrespective of whether it was an appeal or a complaint, in this instance the College did not follow its own quality assurance procedures. Normally, an appeal is considered directly by the awarding body and a complaint is considered under the College policy by the 'most trusted person' at the informal stage, usually a personal tutor, and the 'most directly responsible person' under the formal stage.

Academic appeals are heard by an Appeals Board consisting of the Principal (or designate), Academic Registrar and Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee. Appeals relating to the quality of support services are considered by the SLT. The College did not follow its own procedures precisely when it considered the complaint at Academic Board and could possibly have prejudiced any potential appeal by involving staff who would have been involved at that stage.

2.106 The team also found that inconsistencies exist between the Complaints Policy and the Higher Education Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants. Staff believe that students should only use the Complaints Policy after they have enrolled although the policy states that students accepted for a programme of study at the College but not yet registered may complain if their complaint involves the admission process. This has the potential to be misleading for students as it suggests either policy can be used but the procedures are different. The team therefore **recommends** that the College ensure that the complaints and appeals processes are comprehensive and coherent.

2.107 The team found that there was a need for the College to address weaknesses in the policies and procedures relating to complaints. However, the issues are confined to a small part of the provision, and students are satisfied that they are able to make a complaint should it be needed. The team therefore concludes that Expectation B9 is met but, due to the lack of clarity about responsibilities in relation to complaints and the need for the College to apply their processes more rigorously, the level of associated risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.108   Placement is defined by the College as field experience, and is an integral, formal component of the College's provision in undergraduate Theology. It takes place through modules at Levels 4, 5 and 6 on programmes validated by UWTSD.

2.109   Placements take a variety of forms, including concurrent placements, whereby a student is assigned to a local church for their placement, usually between 12-18 months, and block placements, of eight and seven-10 days. This combination of placements is designed to expose students to a range of church ministry contexts, supervisory styles and ministry tasks.

2.110   Placements are organised by the Director of Ministry Placement and students are supported by a Pastoral Supervisor while on placement. The role of the Pastoral Supervisor is to hold regular supervision meetings with students and support them through the placement, providing the student with appropriate opportunities to fulfil the requirements of the programme.

2.111   The School of Business promotes voluntary placements (referred to as internships) for the BS Business Studies. However, internships do not form part of the formal curriculum and are not assessed. The onus on securing an internship rests with students and the College provides assistance to students in terms of terms of CV preparation and interview coaching once an opportunity has been found. The College does not actively identify internship opportunities due to resourcing constraints. Support is further augmented by the Business Skills and Advanced Business Skills Modules that form part of the BS Business Studies.

2.112   These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.113   The team tested the Expectation by meeting with a placement supervisor, students who have undertaken placements, and staff involved in the placement process. The team also evaluated evidence, including validation documentation, reports from UWTSD and the Placement Handbook.

2.114   There is a robust structure in place to ensure that students are appropriately supported while on placement and that there is a structured process to address their learning needs. The Department of Theological Studies has a comprehensive Placement Handbook that is provided to students and articulates guidance for the field ministry placement. This includes details on the rationale and expectations of the various placements for different programmes, as well as details on the framework of policies and procedures that govern placements. The handbook also details the role and responsibilities of the Director of Field Education and Pastoral Supervisor, and the expectations of students.

2.115   The College operates a process for assessing and monitoring the quality of placement learning opportunities, and a contract is developed between the student and Pastoral Supervisor before the student starts their placement. It is the responsibility of

students to source a placement but there is appropriate support and guidance provided by the College.

2.116   Students are not visited while on placement but regular tutorial meetings take place to monitor student progress. There is also regular dialogue between the College and Pastoral Supervisor to ensure that students are sufficiently supported while on placement. Training is provided for Pastoral Supervisors by the College and they are clear on their role and responsibilities. Students report that staff are supportive and where issues are identified with their placement actions are taken to address their feedback such as relocation to a different placement.

2.117   The assessment of students undertaking placements is not based on student performance but on the students' own critical reflection of his or her experience. This feeds into formative and summative written assignments that form part of the modules at Levels 4, 5 and 6. Assessment is overseen by College staff and Pastoral Supervisors are not involved in the assessment process.

2.118   Students are required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and are not placed in a field placement until their DBS status has been satisfactorily determined. Where an issue arises through a DBS check, the Director of Ministry Placement ensures that the student has the opportunity to meet field experience learning outcomes. This may involve placing the student in an environment which may not be a church but would nevertheless enable the student to achieve the required pastoral experience. This process is overseen by the programme board.

2.119   There are rigorous arrangements in place to oversee and monitor the quality of placement learning opportunities. The effective management of placements is further underpinned by close relationships between the College and Pastoral Supervisors. The review team concludes that Expectation B10 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

2.120   The College does not currently offer research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.122   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.

2.123   Of the 10 applicable Expectations, all are met, with one feature of good practice identified in Expectation B4, five recommendations identified in Expectations B3, B6, B7, and two in B9 that are identified as a moderate risk, and one affirmation in B1.

2.124   The team made five recommendations regarding learning opportunities. For Expectation B3 the College needs to ensure consistency in the articulation, implementation and monitoring of minimum content for the VLE. The formal VLE Policy does not articulate a clear minimum threshold of content relating to learning resources or materials to be included on VLE sites and there is no systematic procedure in place to monitor the information contained on sites across the College. A clearer articulation of the required content and monitoring procedures to ensure implementation would ensure consistency.

2.125   The recommendation made in Expectation B6 relates to the approval of assessment briefs for students. There is an internal approval system for assignment briefs and examinations, and examinations are scrutinised by the external examiner. However, assignment briefs are not currently submitted for external moderation and the team recommends that this is implemented to ensure full compliance with University requirements.

2.126   The College states that external examiners' reports are available from the VLE and are provided in the respective programme handbooks. However, students were not aware of this and the team was unable to find the reports in the stated places. The recommendation made for Expectation B7 is therefore to ensure that all external examiner reports are accessible to students.

2.127   The team identified two recommendations for Expectation B9 with moderate risk. One relates to the understanding of the process described in the Academic Complaints Policy and the support arrangements for students who submit a complaint. Students are content that their concerns are addressed but more precise information in the College policy and the implementation of a mechanism to support students during the process would improve the quality of learning opportunities for students.

2.128   The second recommendation for Expectation B9 is to ensure that the complaints and appeals processes are comprehensive and coherent. The team found a lack of understanding of, and inconsistencies in, the implementation of the Complaints Policy, and the Higher Education Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants. Staff believe that the Complaints Policy can only be used by students post enrolment, and a departure from internal quality assurance procedures in dealing with an alleged appeal, led the team to recommend that more comprehensive and coherent processes are necessary to prevent misunderstanding.

2.129   The affirmation made for Expectation B1 relates to approval processes for the development of new programmes. The process for programme design and development within the College is complex and rigorous and staff are confident that the measures are in place to ensure new programmes are adequately considered from every perspective before being launched. The team affirms the steps being taken to ensure that the development of new programmes follows a robust and systematic approval process.

2.130   The team identified one area of good practice - in Expectation B4 the comprehensive approach used to identify, analyse and meet the learning resource needs of students. The library carries out a rigorous annual evaluation that covers a wide range of areas. Actions are identified and taken forward. In the Library surveys conducted for 2015 and 2016 students stated that the availability of and access to learning resources is good and the team identified the comprehensive measures used to identify, analyse and meet student needs in this area to be good practice.

2.131   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's Public Information Policy clearly sets out the arrangements and responsibility for the construction, management and approval of information. Academic Board approves the Handbook of Academic Programmes and programme specifications and programme boards approve programme handbooks. Programme teams maintain the content of information on the website but the College's Recruitment Marketing and Sales team play a key role in overseeing this process. UWTSD also plays a central role in the ultimate approval and monitoring of information which is managed through validation, the link tutor and periodic audits.

3.2   The College's Recruitment, Marketing and Sales team has undergone a period of change with new leadership and rebuilding of the College website, which will be launched in early 2017. The College views the website as more externally facing whereas internal information will be provided for staff and students through the VLE.

3.3   The clear policy framework for managing information set out in the Public Information Policy, the well-structured website and VLE, together with comprehensive student handbooks and the role of UWTSD in approving information would enable Expectation C to be met.

3.4   The team tested this Expectation by meeting with staff and students. The team also viewed relevant policies and marketing material and the VLE and website. In addition, the team scrutinised programme handbooks and correspondence from UWTSD approving College information.

3.5   The College is required to have publications and promotional material approved by UWTSD and the team noted that programme handbooks had been considered as part of programme validation and, more recently, through a University audit. Monitoring of information for non-UK provision is conducted by curriculum area heads on a regular but informal basis. This approach is supplemented by a system of automatic reminders from the Recruitment, Marketing and Sales team, across all provision, to review website pages on a monthly basis. UWTSD conducts periodic checks on the College's website, and the most recent has demonstrated compliance with the awarding bodies' requirements.

3.6   Staff from the Department of Theological Studies use the VLE more than their colleagues in the School of Business. As described in paragraph 2.35, the College is discussing whether to introduce a minimum content threshold, but students are nevertheless satisfied with the role the VLE plays in their studies and the balance between online and physical resources.

3.7   The student portal and VLE are used to provide students with programme materials and to access key policies and central documentation which relates to their studies. However, as noted in paragraph 2.85, external examiner reports are not routinely available to students who are unfamiliar with the reports themselves.

3.8   The team found that the role of UWTSD in approving and monitoring information, the well-understood internal monitoring systems operated by the College and the high degree of student satisfaction with information allows Expectation C to be met with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.10   The College provides information about its higher education provision for prospective and current students, employers, staff, and public stakeholders, and for those with responsibility for maintaining standards and assuring quality in hard and electronic formats. Information is almost always accessible, and is appropriate and reliable.

3.11   No recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice relate to this area.

3.12   The College's Public Information Policy clearly sets out the arrangements and responsibility for the construction, management and approval of information. Academic Board approves the Handbook of Academic Programmes and programme specifications and programme boards approve programme handbooks. UWTSD plays a central role in the ultimate approval and monitoring of information which is managed through validation, the link tutor and periodic audits.

3.13   The student portal and VLE are used to provide students with programme materials and to access key policies and central documentation relating to their studies. However, external examiner reports are not routinely available to students who are unfamiliar with the reports themselves.

3.14   The role of UWTSD in approving and monitoring information, the well-understood internal monitoring systems operated by the College and the high degree of student satisfaction with information leads the team to conclude 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   Historically, the Principal has been the focus for driving enhancement, often through formal and informal engagement with Governors, SLT, academic and professional services, staff, and students. The College has now developed a draft Enhancement Strategy that recognises the importance of robust interrogation of data. It will be considered for implementation by Academic Board later in 2017. The strategy identifies the SLT as the body ultimately responsible for enhancement at the College.

4.2   The College is undertaking enhancement initiatives that are rooted in a strong institutional commitment to further improve the quality of learning opportunities for students within a particular confessional context and ethos. The Strategic Plan contains a series of priorities with associated objectives that detail the steps to be taken at programme level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. However, the status of a number of objectives remains unclear, and it is not evident how the College currently assures itself it has improved through the systematic and robust interrogation of data. This will be addressed by the implementation of the Enhancement Strategy.

4.3   The College's strategic approach to enhancing the student learning experience is embedded within a culture of continuous improvement in a number of areas, which allows students the opportunity to base their learning in practice. The successful validation event, in 2015, for the BA, Graduate Diploma, and MA programmes demonstrates the College's systematic approach to enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities by revising the programme content and developing a blended learning strategy.

4.4   The College invests time and effort into individual and team initiatives to improve the student experience and to increase opportunities for extended extracurricular learning activities. For example, field trips in Business Studies to international settings, complement and enhance the opportunities provided by the formal academic programmes.

4.5   The College has a set of strategic aims and policies that, taken together, would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.6   The review team considered the effectiveness of the College's approach by reviewing a range of documentation, including data, strategic and business plans, annual monitoring reports, validation documentation and committee minutes.

4.7   The team raised questions in meetings with staff, students, employers and placement providers, with a focus on how the various enhancement initiatives were systematically organised, planned and monitored.

4.8   The review team confirms the productive nature of the relationship with UWTSD, and how the College uses this relationship to support learning and teaching and clearly aligns its activities to the Quality Code.

4.9   Although the College is only now developing a formal enhancement strategy, the review team was able to identify the College's enhancement approach through the meetings it held with staff, students and external stakeholders, and its examination of minutes of meetings, strategic plans, and annual monitoring reports. The review team **affirms** the steps

taken to develop an enhancement policy, and to explicitly embed enhancement in the strategic framework of the provider.

4.10   Support staff confirm that a number of initiatives are underway with the aim of enhancing students' learning opportunities. Examples of this are the strategic targeting of eBooks, the development of blended learning opportunities, and, more strategically, through the stated intention of identifying enhancement priorities through the annual monitoring processes.

4.11   However, in evaluating the manner in which approaches to enhancement are considered at different levels in the College, the team found limited strategic oversight of the College's enhancement activities. The team **affirms** the establishment of a new strategy group with a focus on enhancement that includes staff and governors.

4.12   The College does not routinely collect qualitative and quantitative data from employers and placement providers to inform annual monitoring processes or enhancements. There are no indicators of success or impact measures so it is not clear how the College knows that it has improved, by, for example, the systematic and robust interrogation of data. Data about student admission, progression and completion, however, is regularly considered by committees and annual monitoring processes, and the draft enhancement strategy offers a means by which the data can be used more effectively at a strategic level to inform enhancement activity.

4.13   There is an effective committee structure, but the terms and remit of committees do not include deliberative consideration of enhancement as a standing item, although enhancement initiatives are reported in programme boards.

4.14   Quality assurance processes are designed to be used to inform enhancement initiatives, principally through the annual monitoring processes. These processes provide a foundation for enhancement initiatives that can usefully inform the College's overall approach to enhancement, beyond the standard operational activities for improvement.

4.15   The strategic approach to enhancement is in its early stages, but it is clear the College enhances the quality of students' learning opportunities. Student data is collected and reviewed, and informs decision-making. The contribution of employers and placement providers to the quality of students' learning experience is positive. Students value their field-based learning, which helps them with employment prospects.

4.16   The review team concludes that the Expectation in respect of Enhancement is met, and that the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.18   The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are two affirmations made for this judgement area.

4.19   The College has a range of strategies, support structures and events that reflect its approach to enhancement, that are rooted in a strong institutional commitment to further improve the quality of learning opportunities for students within a particular confessional context and ethos. Responsibility for overseeing enhancement is moving to the SLT with the development of an enhancement strategy that recognises the importance of robust interrogation of data. The review team affirms the development of an enhancement policy and to explicitly embed enhancement into the strategic framework of the College.

4.20   A number of initiatives are underway to enhance the students' learning opportunities, including strategic targeting of eBooks, development of blended learning opportunities, and, more strategically, the identification of enhancement priorities through the annual monitoring processes. However, in evaluating the manner in which approaches to enhancement are considered at different levels in the College, the team found limited strategic oversight of the College's enhancement activities. The team affirms the establishment of a new strategy group with a focus on enhancement that includes staff and governors.

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

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) handbook](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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