

Review for Specific Course Designation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Norland Nursery Training College Ltd

January 2014

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Key findings about Norland Nursery Training College Ltd

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in January 2014, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programme it offers on behalf of the University of Gloucestershire.

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

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

Good practice

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

- the meticulous operational oversight of academic standards by the Academic Board and its supporting committees (paragraph 1.2)
- the detailed and considered approach to programme approval (paragraph 1.4)
- the coherent strategic approach to the use of technology-enabled learning (paragraph 2.4)
- the systematic enhancement of student employability (paragraphs 2.6, 2.9 and 3.2)
- the thorough and considered response to student feedback (paragraph 2.10)
- the comprehensive support for staff development (paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13)
- the exceptionally rapid development of the enriched virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.15)
- the seamless integration of the College website and social media platforms (paragraph 3.2).

Recommendations

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

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

- clarify the oversight of academic standards within its committee structure (paragraph 1.3)
- track moderation decisions to ensure transparency (paragraph 1.7)
- identify a formal mechanism for collating and disseminating good practice (paragraph 1.8)
- consider how lesson observations can best underpin and enhance the strategic approach to learning and teaching (paragraph 2.5)
- review student representation and training at all organisational levels (paragraph 2.11).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)¹ conducted by [QAA](#) at Norland Nursery Training College Ltd (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the University of Gloucestershire (the University). The review was carried out by Mr Craig Best, Mr Mark Langley, Mrs Trudy Stiles (reviewers) and Mr Robert Jones (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding body and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- *Subject benchmark statement: Early childhood studies*
- the regulations of the University.

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

The College is a private education institution specialising in early years education. It has a long and distinguished history commencing in the nineteenth century. The College underwent significant change in 2003 with a move to its present location in Bath and the development of an honours degree programme. Currently, students are following a degree programme which is taught over four years, comprising two years full-time for a higher education diploma (Dip HE) and a further two years part-time for the honours degree.

Additionally, students on the degree programme study for the Norland Diploma. This is a college-awarded diploma and is a requirement for graduates wishing to practise in early years settings as Norlanders. The term 'Norlander' refers to a Norland graduate who has achieved at least a level 5 qualification (the Dip HE) and the Norland Diploma. Through the combination of these two awards, a Norlander is highly skilled in the practical aspects of caring for and supporting the development of children in the 0–8-year age bracket, and has the underpinning knowledge and understanding required to carry out these duties to the highest standards. Norlanders are highly sought after within the sector, particularly by families seeking nannies.

There are currently 162 students at the College (106 full-time and 56 part-time). There are five academic staff (4.8 full-time equivalents) teaching for the degree and five (3.6 full-time equivalents) teaching for the diploma.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programme, listed beneath its awarding body:

University of Gloucestershire

- Dip HE/BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx

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

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College has a significant level of autonomy in managing its curricular development, teaching, assessment and learning opportunities, subject to overall monitoring and review by the University.

Recent developments

The College is concluding its BA Early Childhood Studies programme in favour of a three-year full-time programme, the BA (Hons) Early Years Development and Learning, which has recently been validated by the University. The decision to change the format of the programme was based on an analysis of student progression data together with student feedback that the part-time attendance was too demanding, as the students were also in full-time employment. The 2013 intake will have the opportunity to transfer to the new three-year programme during their course, once designation has been achieved. Prospective students were made aware of these changes before enrolment. In parallel, a Foundation Degree in Early Years Development and Learning has been validated by the University. This is a blended learning programme. The intention is that it will recruit in September 2014, allowing time to develop the necessary supporting materials.

The College has recently carried out a refurbishment programme to improve the teaching accommodation and create a student recreation area.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on the higher education programme at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Two students wrote the review, based on questionnaires, minutes from student meetings, input from student representatives and individual discussions. It carefully represented a range of views, covered a great deal of ground and was very helpful to the review team. Students met the Coordinator during the preparatory meeting and the team during the review visit. Both meetings were highly productive.

Detailed findings about Norland Nursery Training College Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The responsibilities for academic standards delegated to the College by the University are clearly defined in the current partnership agreement. The College carefully monitors its clear mechanisms for managing oversight of academic standards (see paragraph 1.2). Its evaluative approach is responsive to external examiners, annual monitoring reports, action plans and University monitoring. The University has yet to periodically review the College, so the College commissioned an independent Academic Audit in 2011 to support its development. A key finding was to introduce annual self-assessment addressing all the College's academic and non-academic activities. The College will complete the first review this academic year and then consider the effectiveness of the process.

1.2 The meticulous operational oversight of academic standards by the Academic Board and its supporting committees is **good practice**. The College's engagement with University requirements shows extreme care and thoroughness. Curriculum Leaders are responsible for the academic standards of their programmes. Each chairs a Course Board, which the Vice Principal attends. Course boards receive external examiners' reports, module-level reports from designated module leaders and feedback from student forum meetings. Meeting minutes are granular in detail. The Principal, who has overall responsibility for academic standards, chairs the Academic Board, membership of which includes the Vice Principal, the curriculum leaders and student representatives. Curriculum leaders maintain an ongoing dialogue with the external examiner. The Board receives external examiners' reports and minutes from Course Boards, ensuring meticulous management of academic standards.

1.3 The College's committee structure maintains strategic oversight of academic standards, but could be clearer. The College's non-executive Board of Directors meets quarterly and receives reports from the Academic Board and three subcommittees. A director chairs the Curriculum Development Subcommittee, consisting of three directors with the Principal and Vice Principal in attendance only and no student representation. The 2011 academic audit questioned whether this committee could have detailed oversight of academic standards. In the subsequently revised committee structure, academic standards are within the remit of the Academic Board, which interacts fully with the University's academic oversight. However, academic standards also appear in the remit of the Curriculum Development Subcommittee, although its minutes focus on strategic planning and a review of the commercial business of the College. It would be **desirable** for the College to clarify the oversight of academic standards within its committee structure.

1.4 The College's detailed and considered approach to programme approval is **good practice**. The College rewrote its degree programme in 2012, responding directly to sector developments and resolving student concerns about balancing work commitments with two part-time years of level 6 study. The highly collaborative process of consultation with employers, staff and students has ensured that this historically significant provision retains its traditional values and continues to lead current practices.

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

1.5 The College engages fully with the appropriate external reference points. Mapping against the Quality Code is ongoing, but programmes clearly reflect *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards, Chapter A1: The national level* and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. College policies and procedures reference the Quality Code and University guidelines. Subject-specific reference points include the *Subject benchmark statement: Early childhood studies*, the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 and the Teaching Agency's definition of 'full' and 'relevant' qualifications.

1.6 Staff awareness of the Quality Code is consistent across the College. The 2011 academic audit noted that awareness of the Academic Infrastructure within the College was underdeveloped. The College has since made considerable progress in engaging with the Quality Code. Through the collaborative programme rewriting process (see paragraph 1.4), staff have good awareness of *Chapter A1: The national level*. They have also fully engaged with the Quality Code when recently revising and developing 14 of the College's policies. Embedding these in practice will consolidate engagement with the Quality Code.

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

1.7 The College's assessment processes are thorough, but moderation decisions could be more transparent. The Vice Principal chairs the Academic Scrutiny Panel, which considers all assessment processes and oversees second marking and internal moderation in line with clear College policies. Minutes indicate a rigorous process and external examiners' reports express confidence in the quality of assessment design, marking and moderation. Feedback templates provide a clear and efficient assessment framework and indicate first and second marking, where the University Link Tutor samples work and where moderation occurs. However, it is unclear how staff reach moderated decisions, and a recently introduced University template to track moderation decisions has yet to be fully implemented. It would be **desirable** for the College to track moderation decisions to ensure transparency of decision making.

1.8 Establishing a formal system for sharing good practice would improve the College's secure quality processes. External examiners' reports, course reviews and action plans all identify areas of good practice. The Course Board agenda has a standing item to review the action plan, but minutes do not indicate a consideration of good practice, nor do Annual Monitoring Report action plans list items for sharing. No College committee has good practice within its remit. Presently, staff recognise the need to share good practice but do so informally during staff training and away days. It would be **desirable** for the College to identify a formal mechanism for collating and disseminating good practice.

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

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The arrangements for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are the same as those described for the management of academic standards in paragraph

1.2. The College has the duty of managing its quality and standards by means of its own policies and procedures as well as by complying with the University's regulations.

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

2.2 As described in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6, the College engages fully with the appropriate external reference points. In particular, it generally makes good use of the Quality Code, *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* (but see paragraph 2.11).

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

2.3 The College has given greater clarity to its strategic approach to learning and teaching with the recent implementation of its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. The policy clearly sets out procedures for curriculum alignment, teaching, learning and assessment. Staff are fully aware of this policy. In addition to formal committee meetings, they meet informally to ensure a shared understanding of the College's approach.

2.4 There is a coherent strategic approach to the use of technology-enabled learning that is effectively implemented within programme delivery. This is **good practice**. A significant investment in staff training and designated staff ensures the employment of a range of teaching and learning methods including the varied use of learning technologies, interactive tablet sessions and e-learning. Highly motivated and efficient curriculum teams employ varied learning styles that provide every student with an opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Students commented favourably on the quality of teaching and the use of personal experience in teaching sessions by their lecturers.

2.5 There are two forms of lesson observations at the College: peer observation and developmental observation. Peer observation involves two members of staff pairing up and observing each other's teaching. Developmental observation is undertaken by the Vice Principal. In this, each member of staff is observed once a year and a formal record is kept. While both methods are successful, there is currently no formal mechanism to enable them to inform College-wide strategy. It would be **desirable** for the College to consider how lesson observations can best underpin and enhance the strategic approach to learning and teaching.

2.6 The College has systematically enhanced the employability of the students by incorporation of the Norland Diploma (see About this report) and employability sessions throughout the course. This is **good practice**. The opportunity for students to apply academic theory in a practical training environment supported by established links with employers (see also paragraph 1.4) thoroughly prepares them for the world of work. On graduation, students have access to the Norland Agency that guarantees employment opportunities to Norlanders (see About this report). In addition, the College promotes an ethos of lifelong learning by the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) throughout the Norlander's career (see also paragraphs 2.9 and 3.2).

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

2.7 The College's admissions policy and procedures are clear, fair and explicit and ensure that care is taken in the recruitment of students. The selection process is rigorous, including interviews, essay assignments and group activities, which are conducted with every applicant to ensure that they are aware of the course requirements as well as confirming their eligibility as potential students. An intensive one-week induction is provided to students on arrival. During induction students receive extensive information from their

tutors in practical sessions and the Norland Diploma Handbook and BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies Course Handbook. Both handbooks are distributed in hard copy, which the students appreciate, but are also readily accessible on the virtual learning environment (VLE), as are module handbooks. Students confirm that the admissions process and induction week provide useful advice and support.

2.8 The College has an efficient personal tutor system. All students are allocated a personal tutor and a group tutorial session is timetabled on a weekly basis for students who are in College. Students also have the opportunity to arrange appointments with their tutors during their private study day. Personal tutors are the primary contact for students for both academic and pastoral support, with the assistance of the Student Support Coordinator and Welfare Coordinator, who arrange additional learning support and external counselling.

2.9 Student support given to students on work placements is thorough and effective. Students reported very favourably on the support they receive at all levels of the placement process. They gave examples of prompt action taken by the College in response to their feedback. The College has exceptionally thorough procedures and established professional links that effectively support students' work placements. It provides a designated hotline for students who are out on placement, structured visits and extensive documentation to support the work placement. This strongly enhances the employability of the students.

2.10 The College gives thorough consideration to issues raised by students and takes rapid and effective action in response. Individual students have a number of opportunities to feed into the process, ranging from undertaking surveys to raising issues through their representatives on academic committees to speaking directly to a member of academic staff. The College clearly considers student views carefully and takes prompt action when appropriate. It reports back to the student body by means of posters headed 'You said, we did'. Students gave many examples of prompt action taken in response to issues they had raised. In addition, each module handbook includes examples of previous concerns raised in module evaluations by students and how these have been resolved. This is **good practice**.

2.11 The College has not yet fully engaged with the Quality Code, *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B5: Student engagement*, Indicator 3: 'Arrangements exist for the effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels, and these arrangements provide opportunities for all students to be heard.' From comments made by students, it was clear that they were unaware of the relation between their fees and the generous provision of staffing and other educational resources at the College. Moreover, they have no direct involvement in the development and enhancement of areas of the college-wide provision that will directly affect them, such as the Norland Agency and employability. There are no student representatives on the Board of Directors, which would enable them to be more clearly informed about such matters and report back more effectively to their fellow students. Student representatives on other committees are briefed but receive no systematic training. It would be **desirable** to review student representation and training at all organisational levels.

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

2.12 The College has a clear and comprehensive staff development policy. Individual staff development requirements are determined through a rigorous annual appraisal process in which the previous year's targets are evaluated together with the latest lesson observation outcomes, and new targets are set for the following year. The College invests heavily in scholarly activity and staff development through funding and time allocation. It currently supports a wide range of subject updating and scholarly activities. For example, a dissertation based on 'Sustained Thinking' has fed back into lectures and has also benefited

other lecturers. Additionally, an interest in peer assessing for students has led to current research in this area.

2.13 College teaching initiatives are supported by relevant staff development to enable full and prompt use of equipment provided as a result of considerable investment in technology or to act upon careful analysis of feedback from students. Examples are the tablet and smart-board training for all staff and workshops to develop more variety in teaching methods and effective use of the VLE. The College satisfies both institutional needs and those of individual members of staff. Its comprehensive support for staff development is **good practice**.

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

2.14 The College's resources are appropriate for enabling students to meet the requirements of their programmes. The physical environment is suitable for the nature of learning activities being provided at the College. The premises have been recently refurbished to use all available space for learning. Student feedback has influenced investment in e-books and alterations to the physical learning environment at the College. The Learning Resource Centre has an extensive range of materials that has recently been greatly enhanced.

2.15 The integrated design of the VLE provides student access by means of one central hub. This consistently applied structure has been very rapidly designed, developed and populated following the appointment of an e-Learning Coordinator. It provides ready access to programme handbooks, policies, academic writing reference material, timetables, lecture notes, assessment schedules and e-learning reference materials. Students value the availability and ease of access to all their learning materials and College policies. Students have access to their calendar, email, course materials and e-library within one well-structured, managed and populated VLE from one central access point. This constitutes a rich, accessible and varied source of information. The exceptionally rapid development of the enriched VLE is **good practice**.

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

3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 The College provides clear and reliable information about its higher education provision through a printed prospectus, its website and social media. For potential students an attractive printed prospectus outlines the Norland ethos, the Norland Diploma, the degree programme, the role of the Norland Agency and various career paths that graduates can follow. Greater detail on all aspects of learning is available on the website. The prospectus can be downloaded from the Norland website along with further financial and programme information. The Norland Agency section of the website holds extensive information on career opportunities, including CPD opportunities and typical salaries. At interview, potential students are given information on fees, bursaries, accommodation, uniform and consumables.

3.2 The integration of the College's social media and website facilitates timely interaction and engagement with its prospective students. The College's social media platforms deliver key marketing messages daily to inform, interact with and engage prospective students. Their integration with the College website ensures that candidates have direct access to additional information that is relevant to them at that time. After admission, relevant and timely information is disseminated through a student forum. An additional discussion forum exclusively for graduates of the College is heavily used by them. The forum facilitates the sharing of practice and experiences in a supportive manner, building on Norlanders' knowledge and CPD activity. The Norland Agency uses this forum to promote jobs and CPD courses. Lecturers at the College can also use this forum as a research base from which working practice can feed into the training that is delivered at the College to ensure that it reflects the current working environment. The seamless integration of the College website and social media platforms is **good practice**.

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

3.3 The College has a comprehensive policy to ensure that all published information is complete, accurate and fit for purpose. The policy was developed recently in line with the Quality Code, *Part C: Information about higher education provision*. Responsibility for publicity material and information published on the website and in the prospectus lies with the Head of Commercial and Communication Services. The University approves all marketing materials for the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies before publication. The Curriculum Leaders for each area together with the academic staff produce initial information, which is checked by the Vice Principal and the Principal before publication. Under the terms of the Information Policy, the accuracy and completeness of information published for use by current students is the responsibility of the Vice Principal. The academic content of the VLE is checked by the curriculum leaders and the overall structure by the e-Learning Coordinator. The online handbooks and policies are dated to provide a means of version control.

3.4 Thorough oversight of published learning information ensures that students and other stakeholders can rely on the College's information to guide their studies. This process is supported by feedback from students about the quality of information through online surveys and student representatives.

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

Action plan³

Norland Nursery Training College Ltd action plan relating to the Review of Specific Course Designation January 2014						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the meticulous operational oversight of academic standards by the Academic Board and its supporting committees (paragraph 1.2) 	Ensure that issues relating to academic standards become a core theme at all committee meetings	Develop standard agenda items relating to academic standards for each committee and include in the remit	September 2014	Principal, Vice Principal	Academic Board	Scrutiny of agendas and minutes of committee meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the detailed and considered approach to programme approval (paragraph 1.4) 	Ensure future programme development is holistic and inclusive	Prepare a process for the development of new programmes to ensure future development meets the standards of the recent ones	December 2014	Vice Principal	Academic Board	<p>New process diagram in place</p> <p>Scrutiny of processes for developing new programmes</p>

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the coherent strategic approach to the use of technology-enabled learning (paragraph 2.4) 	Ensure learning technology is core to pedagogy within the College	Review the teaching and learning strategy to emphasise the importance of learning technology and consider staff development	December 2014	Vice Principal, Head of HR	Academic Board, Curriculum Development Committee	Lesson observations, peer assessments, staff development records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the systematic enhancement of student employability (paragraphs 2.6, 2.9 and 3.2) 	Ensure that students are prepared for the changing future world of work	Review the employability programme and the Norland Diploma syllabus to ensure it remains current and fully prepares Norlanders for the world of work, giving them the edge on other graduates	April 2015	Norland Diploma Coordinator, Norland Agency	Vice Principal, Academic Board	Norland Diploma and Employability programme curricula
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the thorough and considered response to student feedback (paragraph 2.10) 	Feedback from students to be more directly and effectively actioned	Designate a student voice coordinator Informal and formal student feedback to be copied to a designated student voice coordinator who will evaluate it and initiate actions	September 2014	Vice Principal Lecturers Student voice coordinator	Academic Board Student Body	Evaluation of responses to student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the comprehensive support for staff development (paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13) 	Develop a culture of research and scholarly activity	Academic Board to consider ways in which research and scholarly activity can be embedded within College culture, led by the Research Curriculum Leader	September 2014	Research Curriculum Leader	Academic Board, Board of Directors	Academic Board minutes, Board of Directors minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the exceptionally rapid development of 	All staff can use the full capability of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to enhance	Individual mentoring sessions with VLE developer for all staff once per month	December 2014	e-Learning Coordinator, lecturers	Vice Principal	1:1 sessions Improved and effective use of

the enriched virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.15)	learning					the VLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the seamless integration of the College website and social media platforms (paragraph 3.2). 	Ensure that social media platforms provide students past and present with the means to give feedback and gain access to continuing professional development (CPD)	Marketing department to review operation of website and social media within its regular meetings and include in annual monitoring	June 2015	Marketing Coordinator	Academic Board	Annual self-assessment Minutes of departmental meetings
Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify the oversight of academic standards within its committee structure (paragraph 1.3) 	Clarity of oversight of academic standards	Review remits of all committees to ensure clarity of responsibility for academic standards	September 2014	Principal, Vice Principal	Board of Directors, Academic Board	Revised remits for all committees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> track moderation decisions to ensure transparency (paragraph 1.7) 	Improved tracking of moderation decisions	Training session for all academic staff on making and recording moderation decisions	September 2014	Curriculum Leaders, Vice Principal	Academic Board	Reports of moderation meetings that track decision making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify a formal mechanism for 	Development of a formal mechanism for sharing	Academic Board to consider and implement	December 2014	Academic Board	Board of Directors	Formal mechanisms in

collating and disseminating good practice (paragraph 1.8)	good practice	ways in which good practice can be shared				place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider how lesson observations can best underpin and enhance the strategic approach to learning and teaching (paragraph 2.5) 	Use lesson observations to identify common themes for development	Prepare an abstract of all observations for consideration at Academic Board	December 2014	Vice Principal	Academic Board	<p>Minutes of discussions</p> <p>Action plans for improving teaching and learning</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review student representation and training at all organisational levels (paragraph 2.11). 	Ensure that the student voice is heard at all levels of the organisation	Academic Board to undertake a review of student representation and training and make recommendations to the Board of Directors	December 2014	Academic Board	Board of Directors	<p>Clear tracking of student representation at all levels of the organisation</p> <p>Arrangements for training student representatives in place</p>

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

More detail about Review for Specific Course Designation can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).⁴

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

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

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

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

differentiated judgements In a Review for Specific Course Designation, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes 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.

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

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

threshold academic standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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