Higher Education Review of Northbrook College

April 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Northbrook College. The review took place from 19 to 21 April 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Marian Stewart
- Mr Howard White
- Mrs Kanyanut Ndubuokwu (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review, the QAA review team:

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

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

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

The themes for the academic year 2015-16 are Student Employability and Digital Literacy,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

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

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages:
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Northbrook College

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body and other awarding organisation **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 is **commended**.

Good practice

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

- The effective promotion of research and scholarly activity leading to the direct enhancement of the student experience (Expectations B3 and Enhancement).
- The flexible, responsive and wide-ranging support for all students which enables them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential (Expectation B4).
- The wide range of assessment strategies and activities used to engage and challenge students (Expectation B6).
- The specialist roles that have been created to support and enhance curriculum delivery and learning opportunities (Expectations B3 and Enhancement).
- The proactive engagement with employers to enhance student learning and employability (Expectations B3 and Enhancement).

Recommendations

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

By October 2016:

- develop a more consistent approach to procedures used in different subject areas to ensure effective oversight of module evaluation, individual tutorial support, and assessment and feedback (Expectations B8, B4 and B6).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that Northbrook College is already taking to make academic standards secure and improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The introduction of a new virtual learning environment to address weaknesses in communication and enhance learning opportunities (Expectations B4 and C).

Theme: Student Employability

Northbrook College has offered vocational higher education since 1994. In developing its provision the College has established strong links with local industry (extending to London in many cases) which it cultivates assiduously. It seeks to engage employers at the strategic

level through its Employer Board and appointments to the Corporation. The College also seeks to engage employers in the delivery of learning opportunities. Employers met by the review team warmly endorsed the College's strategic vision and praised its proactive approach to employer engagement and the quality of its graduates. The College takes care to staff its programmes appropriately: many of its teachers have industry backgrounds and a high proportion are still active, often teaching part-time. It also draws on its industry networks to bring in guest speakers for regular teaching and special events, such as the 2016 (Creative) Industry Week. Students met by the team admired and valued the professional expertise of those teaching them.

In designing and developing its programmes the College creates a work-realistic environment for its students, including engineering workshops, music studios and information technology suites. The College also sends students out into the workplace for short visits and projects, using live briefs from businesses or creative agencies for assessment (often including notional budgets which students must allocate) and encouraging students to gain work experience. Conscious that many of its graduates will become freelance professionals or small business owners, the College promotes the development of relevant skills from an early stage in its programmes.

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

About Northbrook College

Northbrook College (the College) is a mixed-economy further education (FE) college situated in the coastal district of Adur and Worthing. The College has three campuses in West Durrington, Broadwater and Shoreham. The College has delivered higher education programmes since 1994, most of which is now delivered at the University Centre in West Durrington. Its mission is 'to be a centre of excellence for vocational and personal learning, helping people succeed and achieve their potential'.

At the time of its Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) by QAA in 2011, the College had 972 higher education students. It now has 814 students on higher education courses, consisting of 712 full-time and 102 part-time students.

The College offers a range of foundation, top-up and bachelor's degrees, a PGCE, and Higher National Certificates (HNCs) in Engineering. The majority of the College's higher education provision is in the creative industries and this is now all delivered at the West Durrington campus. Other curriculum areas include Motorsport and Early Years. Apart from the Higher National courses, which are awarded through Pearson, all of the College's higher education programmes have been delivered since 2006 through its partnership with the University of Brighton.

The College has identified a number of key challenges facing its higher education provision, including: adapting to changes in funding in further and higher education; dealing with the implications of the student numbers cap being lifted; aligning delivery with the requirements of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP); obtaining employer backing for foundation degrees; and engaging students across the provision.

The College has made satisfactory progress with the recommendations and further development of features of good practice made in the IQER report.

Explanation of the findings about Northbrook College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

Explanation of the findings about Northbrook College

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   Ultimate responsibility for setting academic standards and ensuring that the requirements of the relevant reference points are met lies with the College's awarding partners. The College delivers two Higher National programmes which are validated by Pearson. The rest of its higher education provision is validated by the University of Brighton. The awarding partners are responsible for ensuring that the programmes have positively defined learning outcomes which are set at the appropriate level of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and reflect the relevant qualification and Subject Benchmark Statements. This is made explicit in legally binding agreements. The awarding partners establish academic frameworks, assessment regulations and procedures for programme approval and modification to which the College is subject. The University of Brighton also issues specific guidance to its partner colleges about the use of external benchmarks. The processes in place would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.2   The review team considered the effectiveness of these practices and procedures by examining partnership agreements, programme specifications and validation/periodic review panel reports, and external examiner reports. The team also met teaching and senior staff, employers, and a representative from the awarding body.

1.3   The evidence reviewed shows the procedures to be effective in practice. The College understands its responsibilities, as outlined in the partnership agreements, and underwent a successful Partner College Review from the University of Brighton in 2015. As a further indication of its confidence in the College's management of threshold standards, the University recently validated a new Foundation Degree in Games Development and revalidated the suite of bachelor's degree programmes in Fashion. Pearson also confirmed its confidence in the College in its most recent annual Quality Review and Development reports. The team found no concerns about threshold standards expressed in any of the external examiner reports for the academic year 2014-15.

1.4   As the College designs a substantial proportion of its higher education provision, including the production of programme and module specifications for validation, the team looked closely at its programme approval and review processes. Approval documentation provided for the Foundation Degree in Games Development demonstrates that appropriate attention was paid in this process to the FHEQ, the *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark* and the Subject Benchmark Statement. Account was also taken of the Southern England Consortium credit-level descriptors. In considering other Foundation Degrees offered by the College, the team concluded that the provision was appropriate to the programmes delivered and satisfied the requirements of the *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark*. Revalidation documentation for the BA Fashion suite confirms that continued alignment with the national frameworks and benchmarks had been adequately checked.

1.5   While the awarding partners have ultimate responsibility through their own regulatory frameworks for ensuring that the relevant external reference points are adhered to, there is evidence that the College effectively manages its own responsibilities for doing this within its partnership agreements. 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 (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

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

Findings

1.6   Credit and qualifications are awarded by the College's awarding partners under their own academic frameworks and regulations, specifically the Common Academic Framework and the General Examination and Assessment Regulations (GEAR) of the University of Brighton, and the Pearson BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment Levels 4-7. Both awarding partners provide the College with additional guidance on specific aspects of assessment including moderation and unfair practice. The College has its own Assessment Guidelines which establish basic principles for local handling of assessment in the form of a series of undertakings about security, transparency and rigour. For Higher National provision, the College applies University of Brighton procedures where the awarding partner does not specify them, for example in the handling of mitigating circumstances and the operation of boards of examiners. These are set out in the relevant department's Quality Assurance Handbook and the course handbooks issued to students. Both awarding partners check the College's implementation of their regulations annually through reports made to them by external examiners. Exam boards for the awarding body's provision are chaired by a member of staff at the University and attended by a representative of its academic services department. The University requires the College to complete Academic Health Reports at programme and institutional level and Pearson conducts annual Quality Reviews. The College's processes would enable it to meet the Expectation.

1.7   The review team considered the effectiveness of these practices and procedures by examining documentation including the Assessment Guidelines, local procedural documents, minutes of boards of examiners, reports from awarding partners and external examiners, GEAR, the Common Academic Framework, College handbooks, and the BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment Levels 4-7. The team also held meetings with teaching and senior staff, and a representative from the awarding body.

1.8   The evidence reviewed shows the procedures to be effective in practice. The arrangements in place work well and the College understands clearly its responsibilities and discharges them effectively to maintain academic standards. This has been confirmed through recent feedback from external examiners and the College's awarding partners.

1.9   The awarding partners have responsibility for academic frameworks and regulations. The College adheres to these requirements and has appropriate processes in place to ensure that staff understand and enact their responsibilities in this regard. Within the context of the partnership agreements with its awarding partners, the 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

1.10   The College is responsible for delivering programmes in accordance with its awarding partners' regulations and produces the definitive programme documents through course handbooks and programme specifications. Programme specifications are published on the University VLE, the College website and the College VLE. Course handbooks are published on the VLE. For those programmes validated by the University of Brighton, course leaders are responsible for developing the course handbook, programme specification and programme assessment schedule. They are also responsible for developing responses to programme-level student evaluation while module leaders are responsible for developing and reviewing module specifications, assessment briefs, the module assessment schedule, and responses to the outcomes of student evaluation of modules. Higher Education Managers are responsible for ensuring processes are in place to approve, review and publish course handbooks, assessment schedules, any general College handbooks, and any general support or study guides for students, and to ensure that responses to the outcomes of student evaluation of programmes and/or modules are published.

1.11   For Higher National programmes, it is the responsibility of the awarding organisation to provide definitive course information. The College then produces programme specifications in line with guidance in the BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment 2015-16. The processes to assure the production of definitive course documentation, which constitute key reference points for the delivery, assessment, monitoring and review, would enable the College to meet this Expectation.

1.12   The review team reviewed the effectiveness of these practices and procedures by examining programme specifications, course handbooks, the College website and the VLE. In addition, the team met senior and teaching staff and students.

1.13   The evidence reviewed shows the practices and procedures to be effective. The review team found that the College fulfils its responsibilities regarding the awarding partners' processes. The Head of Higher Education ensures that programme specifications are approved and reviewed annually at the HERB. The University of Brighton Further Education Committee subcommittee also maintains oversight of the programme specifications and ensures that the College makes use of the approved University template. Programme specifications contain relevant information including credit award, learning outcomes, module content, assessment strategies, and assessment and grading criteria. Programme and unit/module specifications are accessible to students.

1.14   By selecting from a suite of optional units provided by the awarding organisation for the Higher National programmes, course teams are able to tailor their programmes to enhance student employability by delivering courses that meet industry and local employer needs.

1.15   Within its awarding partners' regulatory requirements, the College effectively fulfils its responsibilities for producing definitive records. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.16   The awarding partners are ultimately responsible for ensuring that academic standards are set and maintained at an appropriate level and are in accordance with their academic frameworks and regulations. Through its partnership agreement with the University of Brighton, the College has responsibility for designing and developing most of its foundation degrees and degree programmes which are subsequently validated by the University and delivered at the College. Prior to validation by the University, new programmes are subject to internal scrutiny by the Higher Education Review Board (HERB) subcommittee. The awarding body maintains oversight during new programme development through its Further Education Committee Subcommittee (FECSC) of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and the Portfolio Planning Group (PPG). The University has retained responsibility for the development and validation of those foundation degrees and teaching qualifications which are delivered through a consortium provision. The College has centre approval from Pearson to deliver the Higher National programmes which are designed and validated by the awarding organisation. The College's Higher Education Strategy 2015-2018 provides clear aims, objectives and rationale for the College's approach to the development of its higher education provision. The College's processes, and its adherence to those of its awarding partners, would enable it to meet the Expectation.

1.17   The team reviewed the effectiveness of these practices and procedures by examining documentation relating to the College's and awarding partners' course approval and review processes, minutes of meetings, and the Higher Education Strategy. The team also held meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, students and employers.

1.18   The evidence reviewed shows the practices and procedures to be effective in practice. The team saw evidence that the College takes the initiative in proposing programmes to the University of Brighton and designs and develops them in accordance with the awarding body's policies and guidance. The team also saw evidence that new programmes are subject to robust internal scrutiny by the HERB Subcommittee Scrutiny Meeting prior to University validation.

1.19   During the development and preparation of proposed new programmes, the College is responsible for ensuring that external reference points are given due consideration and incorporated into the programme proposal. The team saw evidence that the design of new programmes complied with the FHEQ credit and level descriptors, Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmarks, Subject and Professional Benchmarks, SEEC Credit Level Descriptors and the Higher Education Academy.

1.20   The Higher National programmes have been in place since 2007. Evidence from recent external examiner reports and Pearson's Quality Review and Development visits shows that the programmes are running effectively. The College consults with local employers during the development or amendment of any of its Higher National programmes.

1.21   While both awarding partners retain ultimate responsibility for academic standards, the College discharges effectively its delegated responsibilities for contributing to the development and approval of the curriculum and its associated academic standards. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

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

Findings

1.22   The College's awarding partners are ultimately responsible for ensuring the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of all credit and qualifications awarded in their names. The College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy sets out the College's aims and objectives for ensuring students achieve their academic and professional potential. The authority to award credits and qualifications for programmes validated by the University of Brighton is held by the awarding body's Academic Board, acting on recommendations of Examinations Boards that apply the University's General Examination and Assessment Regulations (GEAR) for Taught Programmes. Module learning outcomes and associated assessment activity are approved as part of the University's validation process, while assignment briefs are internally verified by programme teams. For Higher National awards, the College follows Pearson's Centre Guide to Assessment. The College has internal verification procedures in place for assignment briefs and grading to ensure they consistently meet the required academic standard. These procedures would allow the College to meet the Expectation.

1.23   The team tested the Expectation by scrutinising the evidence provided by the College, including assessment regulations and procedures, external examiner reports, programme specifications, assignment briefs and internal verification documentation. The team also met with senior staff, teaching staff and students.

1.24   The evidence reviewed shows the policies and procedures to be effective in practice. The team saw evidence that staff on teacher training courses contribute to the collaborative writing of assessment briefs on consortium programmes and, more generally, College staff comply with the University's guidelines for moderation of summative assessment.

1.25   For Higher National programmes, programme teams contextualise assessment activities in accordance with the BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment. As a result of thorough and well-organised procedures for the internal verification of assignment briefs, the programme teams are able to ensure that the contextualised assessment activities meet module learning outcomes. The College also has a robust process of second marking and/or internal verification in place to confirm standards of assessment and grade awards.

1.26   External examiner reports confirm that the College's delivery of its higher education programmes awarded by both Pearson and the University is meeting required academic standards, and that standards are being secured through an outcomes-based approach to assessment activity.

1.27   The College has effective systems in place to ensure that the assessment of students is robust, and that the award of qualifications and credit is based on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

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

Findings

1.28   The College manages academic standards and the quality of programme delivery through its curriculum areas. In managing the quality assurance of its higher education provision, the College is compliant with the quality assurance processes and documentation of its awarding partners and this is monitored in the College through an established quality assurance structure. The University of Brighton's procedures for monitoring and review are articulated in its Academic Health Guidance for Partner Further Education Colleges, and Periodic Review Guidance.

1.29   Course Boards monitor course-level management and delivery and quality assurance. The Department Boards of Study maintain oversight of course-level operational issues, recruitment, quality assurance and enhancement. The HERB maintains oversight of all aspects of the College's higher education provision, including any proposed new programmes or amendments to existing programmes. The HERB reports internally to the Senior Leadership Team and Governors, and externally to the University's Academic Standards Board and Further Education Colleges Subcommittee.

1.30   To monitor programmes awarded by the University of Brighton, the College produces Academic Health Reports using a specific template produced by the awarding body and explained in their Academic Health Guidance for Partner FECs. Course Academic Health Reports (CAHRs) are completed by Course Leaders with input from the teaching team. Progress made in addressing identified actions is reviewed as a set item at Course Boards and HERB, as well as through the annual Quarterly Performance Reviews (QPRs). CAHRs for University programmes are reviewed through the awarding body's Further Education Committee Subject Groups. For its Higher National programmes, the College uses the University's AHR documentation for standardisation purposes, and reviews and monitors the reports and action plans using its internal committee structure. The Higher Education Office maintains a CAHR Tracking Sheet which details the receipt of this document, associated action plan, and external examiner reports and responses, together with a record of their being monitored by the Head of Higher Education. Any aspect of non-compliance is reported to, and minuted at, the HERB. CAHR content feeds into Departmental Academic Health Reports (DAHRs) which in turn feed into the Institutional AHR (IAHR). The IAHR is reviewed by the University at its Further Education Committee Subcommittee of the Academic Standards Committee. All Academic Health Reports have an Enhancement Action Plan. The College's own processes and its adherence to those of its awarding partners would enable it to meet the Expectation.

1.31   The team tested the effectiveness of the procedures by examining relevant documentation including course, departmental and institutional health reviews, minutes of relevant meetings including HERB, awarding partners' guidance and academic regulations, external examiner reports, and partnership agreements. The team also held discussions with the Principal, senior staff, teaching and support staff, and students.

1.32   The evidence reviewed showed the procedures to be effective in practice. There is an established board and committee structure, with comprehensive terms of reference, which provides effective reporting procedures for monitoring programme management and delivery, and the quality assurance of academic standards. The team saw evidence that course teams have taken ownership of the University's Academic Health Report process, and apply it vigorously in the monitoring and review of all their higher education programmes, including those awarded by Pearson. The College has developed further the Annual Health Report procedure by introducing additional in-year monitoring of associated action plans.

1.33   For the Higher National programmes, the team saw evidence that, as part of the CAHR process, meetings had taken place with employers to ensure that module delivery is relevant and meeting local engineering sector needs, as well as providing students with employability skills and academic knowledge necessary for degree-level progression.

1.34   In addition to the annual review of programmes, the University of Brighton also carries out a regular cycle of periodic review. Although there is no formal requirement for periodic review of Higher National programmes awarded by Pearson, the team felt that the CAHR process and regular programme appraisal by employers provide the College with sufficient information on the relevance and currency of the programmes.

1.35   The evidence from documentation and meetings clearly shows that the College has appropriate systems in place for programme monitoring and review with regard to maintaining academic standards, and is operating effectively in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

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

Findings

1.36   The awarding partners have ultimate responsibility for making use of external and independent expertise to set and maintain academic standards. The College designs and develops most of its higher education programmes prior to validation by the University of Brighton. In the case of Pearson provision, this consists mainly in the selection of pre-approved modules. In this process the College makes use of external reference points and external expertise to set standards. For those programmes validated by the University of Brighton, programme approval and periodic review panels required by the University must include at least one external subject expert with appropriate academic and/or professional knowledge. These are nominated by the College programme team but approved by the University. Recent reports by external examiners must also form part of the evidence base in periodic review. The awarding partners appoint at least one external examiner to each programme and require them to write annual reports which must include explicit commentary on standards. These are submitted directly to the awarding partner as well as to the College. The College nominates external examiners for University of Brighton programmes but they are approved by the awarding body. For Pearson provision, the College plays no role in nominating or approving external examiners. These approaches would allow the College to meet the Expectation.

1.37   The review team considered the effectiveness of these procedures by scrutinising awarding partners' procedures, external examiner reports, programme approval and revalidation documentation, and criteria for the appointment of external examiners and panel members. The team also held meetings with senior and academic staff, and employers.

1.38   The review team found these processes to work effectively in practice. External examiners are involved at appropriate stages of the quality assurance processes and their reports all confirm that the academic standards of the awards are being maintained. In addition, the College has an effective system for responding to actions identified by external examiners.

1.39   In examining the design and recent approval of the Foundation Degree in Games Development, the review team found that appropriate attention had been paid to external reference points. There was an external adviser on the programme development team and the validation panel was attended by an industry expert along with an expert from a different industry. The course team responsible for preparing the revalidation of the BA Fashion suite of programmes were able to include accreditation by Creative Skillset in their evidence base along with external examiner reports. In addition, an external academic expert was present at the revalidation panel meeting. Although the College does not conduct a formal periodic review of its Higher National provision, it has recently invited engineering employers to comment on both the curriculum and the facilities, including equipment and software, and has taken their advice to extend the teaching in mathematics.

1.40   The College works in accordance with the regulations and procedures of its awarding partners. The evidence from documentation and meetings shows that, overall, the College is effectively managing its responsibilities for maintaining academic standards and making use of external expertise. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.41   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. All of the Expectations for this judgement area are met, with low risk. There are no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice in this judgement area.

1.42   The review team therefore concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations at the College **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

2.1 The awarding partners are ultimately responsible for ensuring that academic standards are set and maintained at an appropriate level and are in accordance with their academic frameworks and regulations. The College's Higher Education Strategic Plan provides clear guidance, through its stated priorities, of the College's intention to develop its higher education provision to respond to economic and cultural demands, and to provide students with pathways to employment and/or progression to further studies. To ensure that new course proposals reflect stated strategic priorities, the College has robust new programme approval procedures in place for both the University of Brighton and Pearson-validated programmes. These procedures are outlined in paragraph 1.16. The adherence of the College to its awarding partners' formal procedures for programme design, development and approval, and its own internal processes, would allow it to meet the Expectation.

2.2 The team reviewed the effectiveness of these practices and procedures by examining documentation relating to the College's strategic objectives, course approval, academic regulations, partnership agreements, and minutes of relevant meetings including Course Board, HERB, Internal Scrutiny Panel, and awarding body validation panels. The team also held meetings with senior staff, teaching and support staff, employers, and students.

2.3 The review team found these processes to work effectively in practice. The team saw evidence that College staff have been proactive in designing and developing the foundation degrees and degree programmes, and in their involvement with the development of, and amendments to, the University's consortium programmes. Staff met by the team acknowledged that new programme proposals have often been initiated following informal conversations at course level between teaching staff and students, or in response to the outcomes of a range of College surveys, for example the NSS.

2.4 To support the launch of new programmes, the College has a dedicated budget which supports the release of staff from teaching during the development stage of new programmes, and covers the cost of input from external consultants. The Continuing Professional Development Policy provides the framework for ensuring that staff are able to access training to support their role in delivering new programmes. The University's validation procedures also require the College to specify the resources they will provide to support programme delivery and student learning opportunities.

2.5 An important element of the College and University of Brighton course approval procedure is engagement with employers. The College has made effective use of employer engagement in the design of a range of new programmes and, more specifically, in the selection of modules to be delivered on the Higher National programmes. Amendments to existing programmes also reflect employer or professional development imperatives.

2.6   In addition to contributing to the selection of modules, employers liaise closely in other ways with staff on the Higher National programmes. Employers met by the team reported that the College is very responsive to their requests for students' development of specific skills and/or knowledge. The College also carries out new programme market research; for example, engagement with employers on the proposed development of an e-Business programme resulted in the College not proceeding due to a lack of employer support.

2.7   While the awarding partners retain ultimate responsibility for academic standards and quality, the College is effective at discharging its delegated responsibilities for the design and approval of courses, including through its close relationships with employers. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.8   Admission to the College is through UCAS and direct application. Within the College Admissions Team, there is a designated member of staff responsible for higher education admissions, including management of the UCAS process. The College has a clear Admission of Higher Education Students Policy which is approved and reviewed annually by both the Wider Senior Leadership Team (WSLT) and the Governing Body. It is also the responsibility of the Head of Higher Education and the Head of Learner Services and Marketing to ensure that information in the Policy is accurate and current. The Policy is published on the College website and the VLE and includes details on accreditation of prior learning and how to make an appeal against an admissions decision. The College publicises information for potential applicants, including entry requirements, through its website, prospectuses and all other related publicity materials. Interviews are conducted by tutors who are required to complete an interview report form. There is a guide available for tutors on how to complete this form. Prospective students with additional support needs can access information about the support available from the website. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.9   The review team examined the effectiveness of the recruitment, selection and admissions policies and procedures by analysing documentation including the Admission of Higher Education Students Policy and support and training for the Higher Education Admissions Team, and by examining the VLE and website. The team also held meetings with senior and support staff, and students.

2.10   The review team found that the policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission work effectively in practice. Students whom the team met stated that the admissions and induction processes were clear and that they had an accurate understanding of their course prior to commencement.

2.11   Induction for higher education students is comprehensive and involves a range of academic and professional support staff. For example, the staff in the Library and Flexible Learning Areas (FLAs) offer their own separate inductions which students can access individually or in groups. Library staff collect and analyse feedback on the uptake and usefulness of this induction annually. The induction pack and timetable are made available on the VLE, and students are required to complete the induction checklist. Induction has formed the theme of discussion at the Higher Education Forum.

2.12   The evidence from documentation and meetings shows that the College has recruitment, selection and admissions policies and procedures which adhere to the principles of fair admission. The College supports students by offering a good experience at initial application and admissions stages and by offering appropriate support to those who need it. Information for prospective students is clear, accurate and widely available. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.13   The priorities set by the College in its Strategic Plan 2014-17 include excellence in teaching, a distinctive curriculum offer including vocational higher education in partnership with employers, and development of a 'digital campus' in teaching and learning. These are elaborated on and supplemented in a cross-College Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2012-16, which includes sections on higher education, and a Higher Education Strategy 2015-18. The documents reference scholarly research into pedagogy and also commit the College to contributing to it, most notably in its bid to take part in the Association of Colleges Catalyst Project on research and scholarship in college-based higher education.

2.14   The College has a system of collective performance management based on Quarterly Departmental Performance Review, drawing on management information, learner voice input and lesson observation. It also assesses individual performance, mainly through lesson observation, setting targets and providing support as appropriate. The College has introduced the role of Teaching and Learning Development Manager with a remit to support programme teams and individual staff, taking responsibility for learner voice activities, some lesson observations, the planning of individual and collective staff development, and supporting research and scholarly activity. The College has begun to introduce a system of peer observation mapped to the UK Professional Standards Framework. The College applies the staffing policy of its awarding body and requires all staff to be qualified in their subject and in teaching. Implementing a recommendation from its recent Partner College Review, the College has drawn up a Higher Education Induction Policy and Procedure for staff new to teaching at this level which includes a checklist that must be signed off by a manager. The College has a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Strategy 2015-17 and a CPD Policy to ensure that development is strategically focused and oriented towards higher education. It also has a budget for research and scholarly activity. These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.15   The review team examined the effectiveness of the teaching and learning procedures by reading relevant documentation relating to the policies, strategies and procedures for teaching and learning, performance statistics, records of programme management, staff development and performance review, teaching materials, research and scholarly activity, and external examiner reports. The team also held meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, and students.

2.16   The review team found these processes to work effectively in practice. The management of learning and teaching at the College is effective, with the senior leadership team demonstrating success in collective performance management, an example being the turning around of poorly performing programmes such as the BA Fashion suite. The team also saw evidence of the College acting quickly to suspend or close programmes which have presented risks in terms of staffing, employer opinion or student feedback.

2.17   Teaching staff met by the team had a clear understanding of the distinctive nature of higher education and were aware and supportive of the College's strategic objectives. Regular Higher Education Forum meetings afford them opportunities to deliberate on

strategy and implementation. Teachers are generally well qualified and supported and a number have become Fellows of the Higher Education Academy. Senior managers are conscious of the need to prepare staff to take on higher education roles and the transition is carefully managed, particularly where assessment of students is involved. Students enjoy their courses, particularly the mix of theory and practice, although they have reported that they would like even more cross-programme collaboration. External examiners are also generally complimentary about teaching and the fact that students are 'work ready'.

2.18 In creating the role of Teaching and Learning Development Manager (TLDM), the College has created enhancement champions and promoters of staff development who are not line managers. Teaching staff met by the team stated that they found this approach helpful and effective. The TLDMs have a diverse role including responsibility for the development of the Peer Observation process and working with academic staff to encourage and support innovation in teaching, and some of them hold specific individual briefs, for example for information technology provision. The review team also heard examples of the TLDMs seeking to turn 'problems into possibilities', an example being an issue raised by the Communication Design external examiner that was turned into a research project.

2.19 The Flexible Learning Areas (FLAs) are staffed by experienced and well-qualified staff members/practitioners. FLA Assistants, described as equivalent to librarians for creative industry resources rather than technicians, are regarded by students as a particularly helpful resource. FLA and LRC staff provide extensive individual support in person, by e-mail and in the form of workshops. As well as providing academic writing and research learning support, the Librarians and Learning Support staff in the FLAs run a programme of study skills modules called e-skills that provide support in the use of digital resources and software. Pastoral Learning Mentors (PLMs) have a brief to provide immediate and flexible support to any student, referring them to more specialised services in or beyond the College where appropriate. The College does, however, recognise that more needs to be done to promote understanding among students of the full extent of the role of PLMs. Noting also the role of the College HE Scholarship Development Manager, the team concludes that the specialist roles that have been created to support and enhance curriculum delivery and learning opportunities represent **good practice** (see also Enhancement).

2.20 As the College's remit is vocational higher education teaching, all of its programmes involve work-related learning with a focus on employability. For example, the HNC Engineering students are in employment and are able to contextualise their assignments and final projects. Teaching staff told the team that they set out to make higher education spaces feel more like industry environments than classrooms. The team saw considerable evidence of the involvement of employers in the design of modules, assignment briefs and other initiatives to enhance employability. These findings support the good practice identified in paragraph 4.6.

2.21 The review team learned of a range of initiatives in teaching and assessment, many of which derive from staff development activities. In the academic year 2014-15, the College funded six pedagogic research projects; in addition, a further four attracted external funding. Over 30 projects have been undertaken in the last six years. The team was shown a number of examples of such projects leading to changes in practice, including the 'Patchwork' writing project whose author won a University of Brighton Centre for Learning and Teaching Fellowship to develop an alternative format to the traditional essay which is in use in Art, Design and Media programmes, and a similar infographics skills project in use in Acting. The team also learned of enhancements deriving from scholarly activity. For example, an Engineering course leader who is undertaking a master's degree explained to the team how he had already updated one of his modules as a result of his studies. The College has had a College HE Scholarship Development since 2007. Part of the Manager's job is to manage the AoC Catalyst Project and to support teaching staff with their research and scholarly

activity. Staff are encouraged to share their research beyond the College, with the team hearing examples of them making presentations at the University of Brighton's annual Teaching and Learning Conference and at other institutions and conferences. The effective promotion of research and scholarly activity leading to the direct enhancement of the student experience is **good practice** (see also Enhancement).

2.22   The College has a number of strengths in teaching and learning, with students valuing the knowledge and teaching skills of tutors and the opportunities to develop their employability skills. The College also has effective staff development activities in place. The team notes two features of good practice concerning the promotion and impact of scholarly activity and the creation of specialist roles. The team also references one other feature of good practice regarding the College's proactive engagement with employers. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.23   The College's mission is to help people succeed and achieve their potential. In its Higher Education Strategy 2015-2018, the College sets out its ambition to support student development by maintaining a supportive tutorial culture, encouraging equality and diversity, and enhancing the physical and digital learning environment. Direct responsibility for higher education strategy rests with the HERB and the Head of Higher Education. To promote seamless provision, the Head of Learning Resources and the Lead Librarian sit on the HERB and representatives of Learning Resources attend Course and Departmental Boards. The College has an Equality and Diversity Committee and one of the governors and one of the Teaching and Learning Development Managers have special responsibilities in this area. The Additional Learning Support for Higher Education Students document provides clear information to higher education students on the services available to support both students claiming the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and non-DSA students.

2.24   The College's services to support students are professionally staffed. There is a Learning Resources and Library Mission Statement and all services evaluate their provision through surveys and monitoring requests at help points. Academic support for students includes induction, bridging events, formal mentoring schemes, study skills, additional learning support, and personal and professional development. In recent years the College has invested heavily in its physical learning environment, redeveloping its campuses and bringing all the creative industry programmes together in a new University Centre. It has industry-standard resources to support vocational education in engineering and the creative arts. It has also invested in a new virtual learning environment (VLE) to which content is currently being migrated and for which a new set of minimum content has been drawn up. In addition to access to the annual cycle of bids for resources, the LRCs and Flexible Learning Areas (FLAs) have budgets for in-year spending. The processes the College has in place would allow it to meet the Expectation.

2.25   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's arrangements and resources by scrutinising relevant documents relating to its strategic and procedural approaches to providing support and resources for students and by reviewing a selection of information available on the VLE. The team also held meetings with senior staff, teaching staff, staff from the support services and students, and was given a demonstration of the VLE and online management information.

2.26   The team found that the procedures for implementing, monitoring and evaluating arrangements and resources work effectively in practice. Support staff met by the team displayed good awareness of issues related to higher education and were confident that they could feed in effectively to the AHR process and more general discussions of provision, both individually and collectively. Their engagement with teaching staff is close and effective, involving attendance at induction events, committee meetings and liaison about individual students in need of support.

2.27   Support for students is a particular strength. Academic support for students is comprehensive, beginning at induction and continuing throughout the course. Induction includes start-of-year meetings and presentations as well as activities to support transition, including co-working between year groups. In the BA Theatre Arts, bridging weeks are timetabled throughout the programme, while in the BA Fashion programmes, there is a

formal mentoring scheme where Level 6 students are teamed with helpers from other years to work on their final major projects. The College seeks to embed study skills and personal and professional development in core modules, as well as providing stand-alone e-skills workshops.

2.28   The team also saw evidence of the comprehensive and flexible support available for students with disabilities and learning needs. Both the student submission and the students met by the team expressed widespread satisfaction with learning and disability support. Students are encouraged to apply for the DSA during the admissions process but are supported to do so at any point. All students in receipt of the DSA successfully completed their courses in the 2014-15 academic year, which staff attribute to early intervention, sustained individual support and the availability of a wide range of services. The flexible, responsive and wide-ranging support for all students, which enables them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, is **good practice**.

2.29   Each student receives two individual tutorials each term at which their progress is discussed and recorded. The team encountered some misunderstanding among students about individual tutoring, although students did acknowledge high levels of one-to-one support. The team believes that this misunderstanding is exacerbated by the existence of a number of different systems across the College for conducting and recording individual progress meetings. These findings support the recommendation in paragraph 2.58.

2.30   In terms of learning resources, student feedback is generally positive, in particular concerning departmental resources, higher education space and the LRCs. However, the College acknowledges that, in the past, students have not always considered resources to be well organised and attributes this mainly to weaknesses in communication. It has therefore responded by investing in a new VLE which, among other things, offers more opportunity for staff and students to communicate with each other. The previous VLE was seen as cumbersome and unable to respond to students' social media expectations and intra-team communication needs. The new VLE also enhances student e-learning opportunities and provides a course and staff communication facility through course-level sites called 'communities'. Students report that the new VLE permits College updates on, for example, timetable changes to be sent to their mobile phones and laptops/tablets. In addition, students are able to warn staff of lateness. Although it is still under development, the College has already made considerable progress with the VLE with feedback from staff and students being very positive. The team therefore **affirms** the introduction of a new VLE to address weaknesses in communication and enhance learning opportunities (see also Part C).

2.31   The College has arrangements and resources in place to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The team identifies one new feature of good practice regarding the support for students. The team also makes an affirmation about the introduction of the new VLE and references the recommendation concerning the development of a more consistent approach to procedures used in different subject areas to ensure more effective oversight. Overall, however, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.32   The College has a Learner Engagement Strategy 2015-2018. The College is committed to involving learners in its strategic decision-making and operational management processes, with the first strategic priority of the Higher Education Strategy 2015-2018 being to 'involve students in the shaping of all aspects of their learning experience'. The College's quality assurance model for higher education is built on student views, and the involvement of student representation at all levels of higher education committees. The College also engages higher education students in their learning experience through NSS results, internal surveys, focus groups, module evaluations, course representatives and informal dialogue with academic and support staff. Course representatives are nominated and, where more than one student is nominated, selected by election by students in each cohort of each course. The course representatives are offered training by the Student Union who also supply a handbook to support them in their role. Representatives are invited to attend Course and Department Boards, HERB and Governor meetings. The College's student engagement strategies and procedures would enable it to meet this Expectation.

2.33   The review team examined the effectiveness of the strategies and procedures in place to engage students by examining documentation including the Learner Engagement Strategy, sources of student feedback, details of the student representation systems, and minutes and terms of reference of relevant groups and committees. The team also held meetings with teaching and support staff, senior staff, the Principal, students, and course representatives.

2.34   The review team found that the strategies and procedures for student engagement work effectively in practice. There are a range of formal and informal opportunities for students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement at the College and evidence of them doing so. The team was presented with evidence that the College seeks student feedback to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, it amends practices and improves learning environments to enhance student learning opportunities. Focus groups based on the NSS questions and themes are conducted regularly by the Learner Voice Co-ordinator and TLDMs. Comments made by students on the FdA Theatre Arts led to a meeting with course leaders and managers at which a set of action points was agreed and their impact subsequently evaluated in the relevant CAHR. More widely, the College uses the student voice from a range of mechanisms to feed into AHRs and action plans.

2.35   There is student representation at course and department meetings, although attendance is somewhat variable. The College is investigating ways of increasing student attendance at meetings. Students have access on the VLE to the meeting agendas and minutes of higher education boards and committees as well as to CAHRs and action plans. The Students' Union is providing a focus for greater student participation in collaborative working with student colleagues, awareness of College management engagement with quality assurance activities and participation in student-related developments, for example the development of a higher education-specific Student Charter.

2.36   The role of the course representative is clearly set out in handbooks and discussed at induction. In addition, the Students' Union offers training to all course representatives. The College, in conjunction with the Students' Union, has recently introduced a group

meeting for course representatives and outcomes from this group have included changes to LRC opening hours.

2.37 Overall, the College has a number of ways to gather students' views and there is ample evidence of changes being made as a result of this feedback. Student representation is adequate at higher education boards and committees although the College recognises that this remains an area for development. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.38   The College's arrangements and processes for assessment are defined within its agreements with the awarding partners. The College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy sets out the College's aims and objectives for ensuring students achieve their academic and professional potential. The Strategy complements the University of Brighton's GEAR which provides the framework for assessing and examining the University's programmes delivered at the College, and the Pearson BTEC Centre Guide for Assessment Levels 4-7 for Higher National programmes. Assessment practices are further supported by the College's Assessment Guidelines document. Relevant Examination Boards comply with the regulations of the University of Brighton and each Board is attended by a University Representative. Higher National Examination Boards have discrete Terms of Reference.

2.39   The College uses the University's GEAR to evaluate prospective students who are applying for Recognition or Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL and APL). The College's Admission of Higher Education Students Policy applies to Higher National applicants. RPL applicants are assessed for admission through interviews with course teams, and the decision to award RPL entry is made at Department Manager level. The College's own processes and procedures for assessment and its approach to complying with its awarding partner regulations would allow it to meet the Expectation.

2.40   The team tested the Expectation by scrutinising the evidence provided by the College, including assessment regulations and procedures, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, assessment guidelines, external examiner reports, programme specifications, assignment briefs, internal verification documentation, and minutes of Examination Boards. The team also met with senior staff, teaching staff and students.

2.41   The evidence showed the processes and procedures to be effective in practice. The College makes effective use of a wide range of assessment strategies dependent on the nature of the subject and the objectives of the module learning outcomes. These strategies include diagnostic, operant, synoptic, critique, peer and self-assessment approaches. The review team saw several examples of different assessment activities and real-world learning environments including the use of professional practice modules and live briefs as an integral part of the foundation degrees in Photography, Moving Image, Illustration and Graphics. The team also heard of several examples from staff, students and employers of the opportunities for students to develop their professional skills as a result of the excellent relationships between the College and a range of companies and organisations. In some instances, the company or organisation has participated in the drafting of the live brief in partnership with course teams. The team considers the wide range of assessment strategies and activities used to engage and challenge students to be **good practice**.

2.42   Programme learning outcomes are clearly expressed and are contained in the programme specifications and approved during validation. Course teams prepare module assignment briefs which are subject to a vigorous internal verification/moderation process. Assignment briefs demonstrate the wide range of assessment activities used to challenge

and engage students in meeting module learning outcomes and this is confirmed in external examiner reports.

2.43   However, the design template of assignment briefs, tutor feedback and internal verification/moderation reports varies between subject areas/courses, whether or not feedback is given in hard copy or online. Course teams have developed their individual templates to meet their own needs and there appears to be no consistent managerial oversight of the templates currently in use. These findings support the recommendation made in paragraph 2.58.

2.44   Overall, students are satisfied with the standard and timeliness of feedback on their assessed work. Information on the 15 working days guidance for the return of assessed and graded work is commonly made available to students by an entry on the assignment brief, on the anti-plagiarism software release date or in Course Handbooks. Teaching staff reported that it is also reiterated verbally by the module tutor. Students also value the opportunities available to them to access constructive support and formative assessment from their tutors during the preparation of their assignments. The College uses student self-evaluation of assessment performance as a strategy to develop student self-reflection on performance and awareness for future development.

2.45   The College operates appropriate procedures that enable equitable, valid and reliable assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning. They provide suitable opportunities for all students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes for the award of credit or qualification. The team identifies one new feature of good practice regarding the wide range of assessment strategies and activities. It also references the recommendation concerning the development of a more consistent approach to procedures used in different subject areas to ensure more effective oversight. The team therefore 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

2.46   The appointment of external examiners for the College's provision is the responsibility of its awarding partners, who also establish the nomination criteria, and train and brief the examiners. The University of Brighton has an External Examiners' Handbook which explains the responsibilities of partner colleges. The College nominates external examiners for these programmes but they are approved by the University. The College is responsible for ensuring that nominees attend training. For Higher National programmes, Pearson nominates and appoints external examiners. The awarding partner ensures that there is at least one external examiner for each programme and that they are members of the board of examiners, moderate assessments and endorse decisions. Pearson also requires its examiners to moderate assignment briefs.

2.47   The awarding partners require them to write annual reports which are submitted directly to the awarding partner and to the College. The Higher Education Office logs receipt of reports and distributes them to the Head of Higher Education, curriculum managers and the relevant programme leader for review at the Course Board. The programme leader must write a response to the examiner and incorporate their comments and recommendations into the CAHR and Action Plan. The Higher Education Office tracks the reports using a spreadsheet, as well as collating them to enable the Head of Higher Education to report on them at the start of each year to the HERB and ensure they are incorporated into the IAHR. External examiners' reports are shared with students on the VLE on the relevant programme page and a page intended for student representatives. The College's procedures and its adherence to those of its awarding partners would allow it to meet the Expectation.

2.48   The review team examined the effectiveness of these procedures in practice by examining a range of documentation including external examiner reports and associated responses, AHRs and Action Plans, minutes of deliberative committees and Examination Boards, and information on the VLE. It also held meetings with students, teaching staff and senior staff.

2.49   The evidence showed the processes and procedures to be effective in practice. Despite some variations in style across programmes, the documentation provided to the team for the report, response and action showed them to be generally complete and appropriate, with examiners satisfied overall with the responses they receive and the actions taken. The team also saw evidence of the moderation of assessments and assignment briefs by external examiners. Appropriate collective deliberation on the reports can be traced through minutes of committee meetings up to the HERB. The team found the Head of Higher Education's annual summary report to be clear and accurate, and the IAHR for the academic year 2014-15 incorporated actions derived from this summary. These actions are tracked in the Action Plan for 2015-16 which is regularly updated.

2.50   The team saw a number of examples of enhancement driven by comments in external examiner reports. These include investment in rehearsal space and technology and improvements in the VLE recommended by examiners for the FdA Theatre Arts over successive years. The College responds in an immediate and positive way to criticisms made by external examiners, for example by checking the effectiveness of immediate actions through a mid-year focus group with Communication Design students. The College also agreed, as a result, to fund a research project by the team leader into improving transition between Levels 5 and 6.

2.51   Students told the team that they were aware of the role of external examiners and student representatives had attended meetings at which reports had been discussed. Reports are displayed on individual course pages in the VLE as well as on a 'community' page for student representatives.

2.52   The role of external examiners is clear and well embedded in the quality assurance systems, and the College makes effective use of reports in the monitoring, review and enhancement of higher education courses. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.53   The Higher Education Quality Assurance Flowchart sets out the annual cycle of quality assurance activities and clearly differentiates activities at course, departmental, College, awarding partner and Governor level. It also specifies which Boards and committees have responsibility for specific quality assurance documentation and the College or University Board responsible for monitoring quality assurance outcomes. The procedures for programme monitoring and review are set out more fully in paragraphs 1.28 to 1.30. The College's own processes, and its adherence to those of its awarding partners, would enable it to meet the Expectation.

2.54   The team tested the effectiveness of the procedures by examining relevant documentation including course, departmental and institutional health reports and their associated action plans, minutes of relevant meetings including HERB, awarding partners' guidance and academic regulations, external examiner reports and action plans, internal survey outcomes, module evaluations, and partnership agreements. The team also held discussions with the Principal, senior staff, teaching and support staff, employers and students.

2.55   The evidence showed the processes and procedures to be effective in practice. The College uses a range of activities to thoroughly monitor and review its higher education provision including: AHRs and action plans at course, departmental and institutional level; Course and Departmental Boards; QPRs; HERB; and SLT. Governors also maintain oversight of the higher education provision.

2.56   The College takes careful note throughout the academic year of feedback from students and employers. Employer engagement and feedback on the higher education provision is sought through Employer Boards, and through networking by course teams, for example the excellent relationships developed between the Engineering teams and local employers, and Theatre teams and theatre companies. Although employers are not directly engaged in the preparation of the CAHRs, course teams seek to gain employer feedback on course content and delivery. For example, one course team held 'Breakfast' meetings with employers as a strategy for gaining employer feedback.

2.57   Whenever possible, the College responds promptly to issues raised by students, for example in the extension of library opening hours. The College has made substantial financial commitments and capital investment in response to student feedback, examples being the investment in the new VLE and the upgrading of theatre facilities. Course Teams take note of the student voice when preparing AHRs, drawing on student comments from a variety of sources including focus groups, Higher Education forum meetings, internal and NSS survey outcomes, student input at course and HERB meetings, and module evaluations. Students have access to the CAHRs through the VLE. In addition, the Student Higher Education Governor plays an instrumental role in providing student feedback to the Board of Governors.

2.58   All courses require students to complete module evaluations. Module leaders are responsible for compiling a module report, which is processed through the Course Board. Student representatives at the Course Board are able to share information on any action

plan arising from the module evaluation report with their class cohort. Module evaluation templates vary in form, as course teams have amended them to meet specific course needs. The College is currently trialling the University of Brighton module evaluation template and course teams are modifying the form to meet their preferences and needs, for example the presentation of student response data in graphical form. However, there is a lack of consistent managerial oversight of the templates currently in development. Therefore, the team **recommends** that, by October 2016, the College develops a more consistent approach to procedures used in different subject areas to ensure effective oversight of module evaluation, individual tutorial support, and assessment and feedback (see also Expectations B4 and B6).

2.59   The programmes validated by the University of Brighton are subject to a five-year cycle of Periodic Review. The team saw evidence that course teams prepare the documentation in accordance with the awarding body's regulations and guidance. Pearson retain responsibility for reviewing their Higher National qualifications. While the College has no formal cycle of periodic review for its Higher National programmes, the team saw evidence that the close working relationship between the Engineering course teams and local and national employers ensures that the courses are constantly under review. This ensures that the currency of module delivery designed to meet employers' expectations and provide students with requisite skills is maintained.

2.60   Overall, the College's adherence to awarding partners' annual monitoring and review processes, and its own quality assurance procedures, allows it to operate thorough processes for monitoring and review of higher education courses. The team makes a recommendation to develop a more consistent approach to procedures used in different subject areas to ensure effective oversight of module evaluation, among other things. Despite this recommendation, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.61   The College has a Complaints Policy which is available on the College website, intranet and VLE. The College also has an Academic Appeals Procedure which sets out the process, scope and grounds for an appeal. For courses validated by the University of Brighton, the awarding body's Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals procedure for partner colleges clearly states that students must pursue complaints through the College's own policy and procedure first unless the complaint relates to a University service. Once the College's procedures have been exhausted, students are then able to go through the University and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The Complaints Policy and Academic Appeals Procedure have been approved by the SLT. The Complaints Policy has also been approved by the Governors. These processes would enable the College to meet the Expectation.

2.62   The review team tested the effectiveness of the procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints by examining documents such as the Complaints Policy and Academic Appeals Procedure, and by analysing information on the College website and VLE. The team also held meetings with students and support staff.

2.63   The review team found that the procedures for academic appeals and student complaints work effectively in practice. Staff and students whom the team met confirmed that most issues are dealt with on an informal basis through dialogue between students and their tutors before the formal complaints procedure needs to be put in place. Students whom the team met were also clear about the differences between a complaint and an academic appeal, and also where to go for information if they wish to make a formal complaint or appeal. Student Services also make students aware of the support available during induction.

2.64   Complaints are managed by the Head of Learner Services, who produces an annual report presenting data on complaints, including a three-year trend of quantity and departmental breakdown which allows the College to identify patterns over time. The report is taken to WSLT and the Governing Body. The outcomes of complaints and appeals are used in planning for quality enhancement and feed directly into changes being implemented.

2.65   The College has clear procedures in place for making complaints or appeals. Staff and students have a clear understanding of the procedures or where to find information should they require it. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.66   The College requires students on its Foundation Degree in Early Years Care and Education and its suite of BA programmes in Fashion to complete work placements, although in the latter case it is possible to meet the module learning outcomes by completing a project at the College. These are the only responsibilities it delegates to other organisations, although it organises visits to workplaces and encourages and supports students to seek work experience.

2.67   Early Years students are required to be working or volunteering in an Ofsted-approved childcare setting for a minimum of 12 hours a week and to be devoting at least half a day each week to work-based learning. The College assigns them a member of staff as their Reflective Practice Tutor who visits them twice at work and the employer must allocate them a Learning Facilitator. Fashion students must find a placement lasting six to eight weeks which they are expected to negotiate themselves. The College assigns them an Internship Mentor; the provider is expected to identify a link person. In both cases, the placement is built into a formal module and assessment is conducted by College academic staff. Early Years students are given handbooks for their placement modules which contain the learning outcomes, assessment rules and logistical requirements. Fashion students receive a Pre-Placement Pack to help them identify and negotiate a suitable placement, building on preparatory activities undertaken in the previous year. They are then given a Work Experience Industry Brief which explains the assessment. All students are required to reflect on their experience.

2.68   The College has a Student Work Placements Policy. This requires formal placements to have defined learning outcomes which relate to programme aims and govern any assessment. It identifies the management of placements as a course team responsibility including risk assessments, a written agreement, central logging of arrangements, and monitoring and evaluating the arrangements in the AHR with feedback from employers and students. To accompany the Policy, the College has a standard Placement Learning Contract. For the Early Years students, there is also a Record of Practice Observation for use by tutors in assessment. The College maintains a central online database of work experience opportunities to which staff and students can add, triggering a health and safety audit. These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.69   The review team tested the College's arrangements for implementing and managing work-related learning opportunities by considering a range of documents and information, including handbooks, pre-placement packs, Placement Learning Contracts and the Student Work Placements Policy. The team also held meetings with academic and support staff, students and employers, and were given a demonstration of the work experience database.

2.70   The review team found that the arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the awarding partners work effectively in practice. The team noted that the Student Work Placements Policy had recently been revised following a request made by the University of Brighton during Partner College Review to clarify the information given to students and employers. The College set up a working group to complete this task by mapping its contents against *Chapter B10* of the Quality Code.

The team found the revised Policy to be clear and fit for purpose and the work experience database useful as a means of communicating opportunities to students and as a central record of risk assessments.

2.71   The team were also presented with examples of completed documents across the placement cycle, including risk assessments. The forms and materials received by students are fit for purpose and easy to use. In addition, the work placement in Fashion is crafted to develop employability skills appropriate to the creative industries, including enterprise in finding employment and reflection on practice. Students who had completed a formal placement informed the team that the College's expectations had been clearly explained and that they had received appropriate support and found the experience to be extremely valuable. Employers who provide work placements or work experience informed the team that they were well briefed and able to give feedback to the College and individual students.

2.72   The College has close working relationships and adequate arrangements in place with employers to ensure effective delivery of learning opportunities. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.73   The College does not offer research degrees; therefore, this Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.74   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. All of the Expectations for this judgement area are met, with low risk.

2.75   The review team identifies five new features of good practice which relate to the following: the effective promotion of research and scholarly activity leading to the direct enhancement of the student experience (Expectation B3); the flexible, responsive and wide-ranging support for all students which enables them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential (Expectation B4); the wide range of assessment strategies and activities used to engage and challenge students (Expectation B6); the specialist roles that have been created to support and enhance curriculum delivery and learning opportunities (Expectation B3); and the proactive engagement with employers to enhance student learning and employability (Expectations B3 and B4).

2.76   The team makes one new recommendation in this area: develop a more consistent approach to procedures used in different subject areas to ensure effective oversight of module evaluation, individual tutorial support, and assessment and feedback (Expectations B4, B6 and B8).

2.77   The team makes one new affirmation regarding the introduction of a new VLE to address weaknesses in communication and enhance learning opportunities (Expectation B4).

2.78   The review team concludes that, overall, 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 has a Communications and Marketing Strategy which provides the framework for managing the information the College publishes about itself. The main tool used by the College to communicate information about itself and the higher education provision is the website with information including governance, key policies and strategies, College strategies, and fees. The website is maintained by the Marketing Department and managed by the Head of Learner Services and Marketing. Course information is in Course Handbooks and on the website and VLE. The Head of Higher Education reviews and updates all programme specifications annually, and they are subsequently approved by the HERB and the relevant committee at the University of Brighton. The College produces a higher education prospectus annually and it is the course leaders' responsibility to revise and update information. The prospectus is approved by the Vice Principal for Curriculum and produced by the Marketing Department. The College's arrangements for the production of information would enable it to meet this Expectation.

3.2   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's arrangements for publication and assurance of information by exploring the availability and accuracy of information on the website, on the VLE and in programme specifications, Course Handbooks and the prospectus, and by examining the Communications and Marketing Strategy. The team also held meetings with senior, academic and support staff, and students.

3.3   Overall, the review team found the procedures for checking and producing information about higher education provision to be effective in practice. Although all students receive course information, not all students receive this information through standard course handbooks. However, students did not regard this as being a problem. Most of the students met by the team were aware of the course handbook as some were given it in hard copy. Others had been told where to find the information on the VLE, while others were not aware of the documents but did have the information in other forms. Some of the students met by the team prefer paperless information as much as possible as they find this easier to organise.

3.4   The College has recently invested in a new VLE and staff and students met by the team were enthusiastic about the advantages compared to the previous system. Work has also been carried out to review, update and revise the Minimum Standards for the VLE. There have been weaknesses in communication in the past which the College acknowledges; one of the reasons for investing in the new VLE was to try to resolve this issue. This supports the affirmation made in paragraph 2.30.

3.5   Overall, the team concludes that the College has adequate procedures for checking that information about its higher education provision is fit for purpose and trustworthy. The team references an affirmation concerning the introduction of a new VLE to address weaknesses in communication and enhance learning opportunities. Overall, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.6   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. The review team references one affirmation from Part B regarding the introduction of a new VLE to address weaknesses in communication and enhance learning opportunities.

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

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

4.1 The College's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and its Higher Education Strategy 2015-2018 set out its vision of successful, confident and independent learners who have achieved their full academic and personal potential. Planning for the enhancement of all facets of the student learning experience is a College priority which is led by the Board of Governors and owned by managerial, teaching, administrative and support staff. The College sees the priorities for enhancement as being student driven, having strong student representation and using feedback to understand student needs. The HERB has oversight of the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards on all higher education programmes. The College's strategies and procedures would allow this Expectation to be met.

4.2 The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the strategies and procedures by examining the Higher Education Strategy, College Strategic Plan, course documentation, quality assurance and enhancement guidance, AHRs, and minutes of relevant meetings. The team also met the Principal, senior staff, academic and support staff, employers and students.

4.3 The College's strategies and procedures for enhancement work effectively. The College, through its Governing Body, has made a series of strategic decisions since 2013 to expand its higher education resources through the building of purpose-built facilities which are resourced to industry standards. Developments include a new VLE (see also paragraphs 2.30 and 3.4) and a University LRC, constructed to replace one that students reported was 'too crowded'. This LRC contains the Flexible Learning Area (FLA). As a result of student and employer feedback, music, theatre and engineering facilities have been refurbished and equipped to industry standards.

4.4 Students are able to access a range of effective learning support services to enhance their personal and academic development. The Additional Learning Support for Higher Education Students document provides clear information on the services available to support both DSA and non-DSA students. Learning support opportunities are accessible and highly valued by students. Support is provided by a range of professional staff including FLA Assistants, Librarians, Learning Support staff and Pastoral Learning Mentors. These findings support the good practice highlighted in paragraphs 2.18 to 2.19.

4.5 The College sees the continuing professional development of its staff as a major factor in enhancing student learning opportunities. The development of the Teaching and Learning Development Manager (TLDM) roles is indicative of the College's strong culture of supporting and developing staff (see paragraph 2.18 for further details). The College also has a strong commitment to research and scholarly activity for its higher education teachers. There is a College HE Scholarship Development Manager, in post since 2007, who works with higher education staff in devising research projects and identifying funding sources. The team heard several examples of research and scholarly activity that has led to staff delivering papers at College, national and, in one instance, international conferences. These findings support the good practice highlighted in paragraphs 2.18 and 2.21.

4.6   The College has established effective and extensive relationships with a range of employers, including input into the College's strategic objectives. The team was presented with numerous examples, in particular from Engineering and the Creative Industries, of how employers play a crucial role in ensuring that programme delivery and new programme development meets sector requirements and provides students with the professional and academic skills necessary for employment and further study (see also paragraphs 2.5 to 2.6 and 2.56). Students seeking work experience placements have a large pool of Creative Industries employers to draw upon. Creative Industry employers met by the team reported that College students were outstanding in terms of contemporary practice and creativity and used their work experience placements to undertake a variety of activities to enhance their learning and future employability opportunities. A national employer reported that the interpersonal and transferable skills of students were exceptional, and that they would like to use their skills in another commercial project. Students reported that the experience of working for an employer enhanced their knowledge of specialist skills and team working. The team considers the proactive engagement with employers to enhance student learning and employability to be **good practice** (see also Expectation B3).

4.7   The team saw evidence that the College actively seeks student feedback to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, it amends practices and improves learning environments to enhance student learning opportunities. The team also saw evidence that student involvement in periodic review activities results in programme design which embeds student learning objectives and enables them to develop the skills and knowledge required by their chosen employment/professional sector.

4.8   The evidence from documentation and meetings clearly demonstrates that the College is taking deliberate steps to enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities. The team identified one feature of good practice regarding the proactive engagement with employers, and references two other features of good practice concerning the promotion and impact of research and scholarly activity and the creation and impact of specialist roles. In addition, the College listens to its higher education students and responds positively to their suggestions. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.9   In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. The Expectation in this area is met and the level of risk is low.

4.10   The team identifies one new feature of good practice regarding the College's proactive engagement with employers to enhance student learning and employability. The team also reference two other features of good practice: the effective promotion of research and scholarly activity leading to the direct enhancement of the student experience, and the specialist roles that have been created to support and enhance curriculum delivery and learning opportunities.

4.11   The team did not make any recommendations or affirmations in this judgement area.

4.12   Using the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the Handbook, there are three examples of good practice in this area and no recommendations for improvement. The College clearly has plans to improve this area further, and listening to and managing the needs of students is a clear focus of its strategies for enhancement. There is a strong ethos which expects and encourages enhancement, together with a range of mechanisms available for staff to explore and share good practice. Finally, the College makes effective use of its quality assurance procedures to identify opportunities for enhancement. The review team therefore concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College is **commended**.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The College has offered vocational higher education since 1994. Its Higher Education Strategy 2015-2018 is informed by the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Strategy and, more broadly, by the 2013 National Industrial Strategy. It identifies high local demand for graduates in the creative industries, engineering and social care and establishes the profile of a technically skilled, confident and enterprising Northbrook graduate who can meet this demand. In particular the College has identified demand in 'fused businesses' which require workers who combine technical skills with creative expertise. To this end, traditional programmes focusing on performance, such as acting or music, are supplemented by programmes which focus on management and technology in the creative industries. A recent example of how the College has adapted its provision is the replacement of the FdSc in Computer Games with an FdA in Games Development with a more creative focus.

5.2 In developing its provision the College has established strong links with local industry (extending to London in many cases) which it cultivates assiduously. It seeks to engage employers at the strategic level through its Employer Board and appointments to the Corporation. The review team learned that the College had recently been steered by its employers away from a proposed programme in e-Business towards alternative forms of provision. The College also seeks to engage employers in the delivery of learning opportunities: each programme team maintains a strong set of industry connections on which it draws; many of these connections are personal professional networks and many involve former students. The College also seeks professional accreditation and joins professional bodies where possible. Employers met by the review team warmly endorse the College's strategic vision and praise its proactive approach to employer engagement and the quality of its graduates.

5.3 The College takes care to staff its programmes appropriately: many of its teachers have industry backgrounds and a high proportion are still active, often teaching part-time. It also draws on its industry networks to bring in guest speakers for regular teaching and special events, such as the 2016 Creative Industry Week. Students met by the team admire and value the professional expertise of those teaching them. They were also aware of the importance of developing professional and transferable skills.

5.4 In designing and developing its programmes the College creates a work-realistic environment for its students, including engineering workshops, music studios and information technology suites. The College also bring professionals into the College and send students out into the workplace for short visits and projects, using live briefs from businesses or creative agencies for assessment (often including notional budgets which students must allocate) and encouraging students to gain work experience. Among many examples, students build and race a car at meetings around the country, design costumes for a company Halloween party, produce three to five-minute features for a local TV company and take photographs for posters for a West Sussex Police campaign against hate crime.

5.5 Professional development and transferable soft skills are built into taught modules in all programmes and assessed by live briefs and logs which encourage reflection on performance. Collaboration between the different creative industries is encouraged and is supported by a vibrant 'unofficial economy' of collaboration in performance among students; the College has recently become able to locate all its creative industry provision on one site which will facilitate both formal and informal collaboration.

5.6   Conscious that many of its graduates will become freelance professionals or small business owners, the College promotes the development of relevant skills from an early stage in its programmes. Examples include the use of social media for professional self-promotion and techniques for pitching concepts to prospective commissioners. The College's Careers Advisor offers support to those seeking such careers, drawing on resources at the local Chamber of Commerce and elsewhere.

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 30 to 33 of the Higher Education Review handbook.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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