



Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) of NYU in London

May 2016

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at NYU in London. The review took place from 11-12 May 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Elizabeth Briggs
- Professor Diane Meehan.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by NYU in London 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 quality of student learning opportunities
 - the information provided about higher education provision
 - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on academic standards
- 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 NYU in London 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 \(Foreign Providers\)](#)⁴ and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/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 (Foreign Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about NYU in London

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at NYU in London.

- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

The QAA review team also provided a commentary on academic standards.

- NYU in London satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at NYU in London.

- Auditioning and selection procedures for NYUTL students are meticulous, constructive and systematically matched against conservatoire programme requirements (Expectation B2).
- Internships are carefully and thoughtfully managed, and offer students a work experience that is aligned with their academic studies, and which they greatly value (Expectation B4).
- The extensive and effective academic and personal support provided by staff and appointed student officers assures and enhances the student experience (Expectation B4).

Recommendation

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to NYU in London.

By January 2017:

- ensure that all teaching faculty make consistent and effective use of the virtual learning environment as a teaching and learning tool (Expectation B3).

Theme: Student Employability

NYU in London takes imaginative steps to develop and improve the employability skills of its undergraduate students, both in alignment with its parent University and on its own initiative. Its graduate programme is intrinsically professionally relevant, being taught by leading practitioners in their fields and involving intensive fieldwork training.

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

About NYU in London

New York University (the University) was founded in 1831. A large and distinguished private institution, it describes itself as having a global network, with sites for study and research in 14 cities in North and South America, Europe, Australia and Africa, of which New York University in London (NYUL) is one. The University, which is subject to accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, validates all off-campus academic programmes, so that all London programmes are required to meet University standards and follow relevant policies and procedures. NYUL is a recognised sponsor of students entering the UK to study as visitors or under Tier 4.

The University established NYUL in 1999 as a registered charity and registered UK company. It currently has 483 undergraduates (including 33 members of the separately managed arts and performance-oriented Tisch - NYUTL programmes); nine masters students reading for the MA Historical and Sustainable Architecture; and 15 visiting fellows (normally overseas faculty or doctoral students). Most undergraduates spend one semester in London before returning to New York or transferring to another overseas centre; masters students remain for the duration. The Director, assisted by 28 staff in three departments (Academic Affairs, Student Life and Finance and Operations), has site responsibility for academic standards and quality. Most teaching is undertaken by some 90 locally recruited part-time faculty, many of them employees of colleges of the University of London. In addition, NYUL has a long-standing exchange agreement with the School of Oriental and African Studies, and Tisch has a similarly well-established arrangement with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, which delivers a core area of its programme.

NYUL was subject to a QAA Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight review in May 2012. This had successful outcomes, with confidence and reliance judgements, four features of good practice (relating to student support; pre-arrival information; preparation and induction; and programme and related information) and two desirable (enhancement-oriented) recommendations relating to formalising institutional responses to student evaluations, and to staff (by which is meant faculty) development. The institution has built on the areas of good practice, and has competently addressed the two recommendations.

The changes since NYUL's previous QAA review include improvements in the quality of accommodation; new programme development; closer integration of NYUL and NYUTL administrative services; and the introduction of mid-semester evaluations of courses taught by new faculty. The period has also seen the ending of a long-standing specialist teaching arrangement with the BBC, to which NYUL responded by increasing places on its Advanced Screenwriting track. It has also, like other higher education institutions, experienced an increase in demand for mental health services, to which it has responded by appointing a clinical psychologist and a wellness counsellor.

NYUL cites as its main challenge the risk of terrorism, which would have a detrimental effect on applications; it has mitigated the direct effects by measures which include increasing campus security. Academically, it struggles to maintain an even balance of student numbers across semesters, and is debating whether and how to equalise the student numbers for each semester.

Explanation of the findings about NYU in London

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

1 Commentary: The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards

Findings

Question A: How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 Ultimate responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic standards offered at New York University in London (NYUL) rests with New York University (the University), as awarding body. The University is accredited in the United States by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. As a UK-registered charity, NYUL is governed by a Board of Trustees, which meets biannually. The University gives final approval for faculty and staff appointments, approves budgets and financial plans, and ensures that all programmes meet its academic requirements. Relevant agreements are set out in an Affiliations and Services Agreements document, which was reviewed and approved by the University and NYUL in 2011. Responsibility for delivering courses rests with NYUL or, as the case may be, the separately managed New York University Tisch London (NYUTL), which offers arts and performance-related programmes, often in conjunction with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA).

1.2 NYUL describes its application and admissions procedures as competitive and rigorous. NYUTL students have additional specific requirements, and applicants for the RADA course are auditioned individually in New York. NYUL students can access teaching at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), where they are subject to its academic standards, policies and procedures and where an agreed system of grade conversion is in place. Sixteen NYUTL students attend core courses provided by RADA; and its Director participates in induction meetings at RADA and collaborates on faculty appointments for the course.

1.3 Guidance on academic integrity is included in syllabi and discussed at each assignment brief, NYUTL and procedures in place require all students to affirm the originality of their written work.

1.4 All faculty appointments are part-time, with most members teaching no more than one course per semester; faculty are recruited predominantly from higher education institutions in London, and are normally qualified to doctoral level. Appointments are subject to University approval. Course delivery is formally reviewed pre-semester by the submission of syllabi, and post-semester by student evaluations; new courses and faculty appointees are also subject to mid-semester evaluation. Senior University academic staff visit periodically to meet faculty and observe classes. NYUTL and the MA programme include visits to relevant performances, events and sites, and invitation lectures from professionals; similar provisions are in place for most NYUL courses.

1.5 Courses are submitted for consideration on a comprehensive template, and assessments are designed and marked by London-based faculty; rubrics, grading standards and feedback are discussed at initial induction and faculty meetings. The NYUL Academic Staff Policies and Procedures Handbook advises how faculty should comply with University standards. In accordance with University practice double marking is used only in cases of an unresolved grade dispute with a student. University representatives review coursework, and final grades are forwarded to the University for review to ensure congruity with marking standards and expectations. Faculty are required to return a graded piece of student work by week seven of the semester.

Question B: How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.6 Since the University as awarding body is subject to accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, as a component part of the University NYUL is similarly so; its most recent review (in March 2014) had a positive outcome. NYUL maps its actions and plans against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) to illustrate its commitment to maintaining high standards and quality of provision.

Question C: How effectively does the provider use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?

1.7 Assessment is undertaken according to University regulations, with NYUL aiming to maintain the same standards of assessment as those operational at the University. There is no other external scrutiny of assessment.

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of academic partners Summary of findings

1.8 Ultimate responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic standards rests with New York University as awarding body. The responsibilities delegated to New York University in London (NYUL) are clearly specified and adhered to. They include all aspects of course design and delivery and staff appointments; in all these cases decisions are subject to scrutiny by the University to ensure comparability of standards with programmes taught on-campus or at other overseas centres.

1.9 The review team found NYUL assiduous in managing its delegated responsibilities. It adheres to the requirements of the University, which in turn is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and, where possible, it voluntarily maps its provision against the expectations of Part A of the Quality Code. External scrutiny of assessment lies in the hands of New York University. All evidence seen by the review team indicates that academic standards at NYUL are assiduously maintained.

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 NYUL, like all institutions of New York University, operates within the University's academic planning system. The University has in place appropriate procedures for the development and approval of new programmes. The University exercises its responsibilities for overseeing provision designed in collaboration with, and delivered by, NYUL through mechanisms that include a London Site Specific Advisory Committee (SSAC), which meets biannually and directs the development and approval of programmes. The review team noted that, in a recent meeting of the Committee, reservations were expressed about its size and diversity in relation to the discussion of specific curricular issues, but that other aspects of its operation were considered to be working well. The team discussed this comment with senior NYUL managers, and established that SSACs facilitate systematic interaction between all decision-making bodies in the University, helping ensure that curricula are coherent across global sites and debated from a policy perspective. More detailed curricular dialogue then takes place in London and other global sites. No plans exist for significant change, although the composition of the Committee is being kept under review.

2.2 NYUTL's academic programme is also subject to review by the University's Film and TV International Curriculum Committee and the Tisch Curriculum Committee. Proposals to change or introduce new courses at NYUTL are evaluated in London on the basis of work undertaken, normally by its Director, in conjunction with campus-based University staff and faculty, the most recent change being in 2015; no recent formal minutes were available for these committees and NYUL has no formal policy in relation to which meetings should be formally minuted. For the MA Historical and Sustainable Architecture, the Graduate Programme Coordinator works with the programme's Academic Director to monitor, review and develop provision.

2.3 The review team explored with senior managers, faculty and support staff the effectiveness of these procedures, including those appertaining to programme approval and modification. The team found that while some provision offered at NYUL comes directly from courses already approved at NYU, NYUL faculty develop courses for delivery in London in collaboration with schools and departments within the University, which are then approved by the relevant departmental or University-wide committee and may also take the initiative in proposing courses for development. Local faculty have the same flexibility as other University faculty to make minor modifications, such as the updating of reading lists and contextualisation of course materials.

2.4 On the basis of documentary study and meetings with relevant personnel, the team concluded that the educational provision delivered by NYUL is subject to appropriate scrutiny and that effective procedures are in place for programme design, development and approval. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.5 Responsibility for admissions to NYUL and NYUTL rests with the University and is exercised in New York, where a range of measures reflecting the demands of the programme concerned are deployed: these include interviews, portfolio assessment and auditions, as well as an analysis of academic achievement thus far. London-based personnel become involved with admissions only following acceptance. For Tisch programmes the Director of NYUTL and appropriate RADA staff are involved in auditioning prospective students in New York. The auditioning and selection procedures for NYUTL candidates, which are meticulous, constructive and systematically matched against conservatoire programme requirements, are **good practice**.

2.6 NYUL is responsible for orientation, which is intended to ensure that students make a smooth transition to London, their residences and their programme. Most activities take place over the first five days of the programme, and information provided during orientation is reinforced during follow-up information sessions and in email and social media messages throughout.

2.7 Where applicable applicants to NYUL and NYUTL must comply with Tier 4 visa requirements. NYUL is responsible for the issue of the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies letters, a duty discharged by two trained staff in collaboration with the University's Office of Global Services for visa advice. An additional requirement exists for candidates for the internship programme; the relevant procedures and requirements involved are explained clearly online.

2.8 This process, out of scope for this review since it is undertaken by the University, appears rigorous and competitive, with all necessary information readily available. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that students joining NYUL have been assessed as equipped to benefit from, and contribute to, their courses, and to have sufficient maturity and financial resources (which are, in some cases, supplemented by a University scholarship and award scheme) to adjust to London life. Nothing occurred in meetings with students to suggest that this is not so.

2.9 On the basis of documentary study and meetings with NYUL and NYUTL managers and staff, visiting faculty and students, the review team concludes that students joining NYUL and NYUTL have been well informed about the available facilities and their academic and personal responsibilities, and carefully selected as having the potential to complete their selected courses. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.10 Course delivery is formally reviewed pre-semester by the submission of syllabi, and post-semester by student evaluations; new courses and faculty appointees are subject to mid-semester evaluation. Students have the right to raise issues directly with the University, but this right is rarely exercised. It is the responsibility of the Directors of NYUL and NYUTL, supported by senior staff, to review student evaluations and discuss them with, or make recommendations to, the University. Student evaluations, which inform planning for the following semester as well as providing feedback on faculty performance, are shared with faculty, and where concerns exist the faculty member is interviewed to identify support needs and may not be hired again. University faculty and staff visit the site regularly to meet with faculty and to observe and report on teaching performances; University staff and faculty do the same in the course of periodic visits to London.

2.11 Faculty use teaching methods that include video conferencing, to link with classes on other sites and to expose students to expert speakers in the United States and elsewhere. Some courses make use of team teaching; in some cases recorded lectures are deployed; elsewhere the internship programme offers practical experience of employment expectations. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate experiential learning in cocurricular trips in freshman classes. The review team, while initially unclear to what extent these initiatives derive from strategic planning, and to what extent from the enthusiasm and commitment of individual faculty, found that a range of successful NYU teaching and learning strategies is carefully and deliberately rolled out in London. A recent example of this proactivity is a strategic approach to improving students' writing and thinking skills.

2.12 NYUL provides opportunities for students to participate in events, visits, clubs and societies, and volunteering to extend their experiential learning and understanding of UK life and culture. A recently launched Leadership Exploration and Development through Service (LEADS) initiative to support future employability is currently under review in the light of student comment. It offers information and reflective sessions, and connects students with relevant professionals. Students also benefit from public programming events, including talks by prominent individuals, which are widely advertised, and MA students are required to attend public events or lectures on relevant topics throughout their year in London.

2.13 A staff development budget supports attendance of both staff and visiting faculty at conferences and other events, and a range of relevant in-house training and workshops are available, including mental health, the teaching, learning and support needs of study abroad students, and emergency procedures, which are a high priority. Staff are now subject to annual appraisal, and mandatory training in specific areas (including diversity) is under development.

2.14 The review team discussed the effectiveness of the use of the virtual learning environment with faculty and students, finding that use by both faculty and students is variable: while in some cases usage is both creative and finely tuned, in others the virtual learning environment serves mainly as a repository. The team **recommends** that by

January 2017 NYUL ensures that all teaching faculty make consistent and effective use of the virtual learning environment as a teaching and learning tool.

2.15 The review team discussed with managers, staff, faculty and students NYUL's effectiveness in developing its students as independent learners and enhancing their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. On the basis of these discussions and extensive documentary study the team concludes that students are well supported to fulfil their potential as learners. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.16 NYUL is committed to providing students with a safe and secure learning and living environment with access to personal and medical services. It reviews staffing needs annually prior to the budget round, and recent years have seen a considerably expanded staffing base. Appointed student officers are also actively engaged in supporting fellow students. Students and their families have access to a Freephone 24/7 helpline staffed on a rota basis, and staff in residences provide a 24/7 response to emergency calls. Reflecting increasing demand for mental health services, NYUL makes additional support available during examination week. Each semester a careers counsellor visits, and panels of locally based alumni provide periodic advice about career options. The Student Life Department offers pastoral and welfare services; specialist provision is available for students with a disability; and a clinical psychologist promotes and supports well-being and good health. Student evaluations of these services are uniformly positive.

2.17 Academically, NYUL monitors and evaluates programmes to ensure that they enable students to achieve their potential. The information about available learning resources provided at orientation includes online access to the University library in New York and to NYU's virtual learning environment. External facilities include access to the University of London Library and the specialist collections at the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Architectural Association.

2.18 Students have access to academic support from senior management, local faculty and visiting University faculty. The Academic Affairs Department's five staff advise and support them across a range of activities, including course selection, experiential learning, study support, co-curricular activities, grade disputes and appeals procedures. Two English for Academic Purposes tutors offer language advice; information technology support is available in classrooms and residences; the Academic Centre contains two dedicated computer suites; the site has well equipped study areas with a dedicated one for MA students; and classrooms and residences have wireless access. Most of these arrangements are detailed in the newly revised Administrative Staff Handbook, which contains updated policies and procedures. The extensive and effective academic and personal support provided by staff and appointed student officers, which assures and enhances the student experience, is **good practice**.

2.19 The NYU credit-bearing internship programme provides opportunities for students to develop academic, professional and personal attributes. Students are selected on a competitive basis, prepared by a seminar programme, and evaluated by supervisors at mid-point and final stages. Those who met the review team confirmed the value of the learning experience and potential benefits involved. The review team found good practice in the fact that internships are carefully and thoughtfully managed, and offer students a work experience that is aligned with their academic studies, and which they greatly value.

2.20 In addition to documentary study the review team discussed NYUL's arrangements for the management of learner support and pastoral care from pre-arrival to departure, and confirms that NYUL takes effective steps to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The expectation is met and the 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

2.21 Some three-quarters of NYUL students study for one semester only, joining to take specific courses approved by the University; the extent to which such students can reasonably be described as partners is therefore circumscribed. All courses are evaluated on completion, qualitatively and quantitatively, and mid-semester evaluations of new courses and faculty take place and are reported to the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs. There are also (see paragraph 1.4 and passim) many opportunities for students to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement: for example the NYUTL programme holds weekly meetings with all students and a weekly drop-in session with the Director. Students evaluate their overall experience; NYUL provided instances of these evaluations influencing both academic and non-academic provision, and informed the review team that it is working to complement the generic evaluations provided by the University with an evaluative addendum for local analysis.

2.22 Members of each cohort are appointed to positions of responsibility either by NYUL or the University: NYUL's Student Life and Academic Affairs departments hire three students to work alongside staff for up to eight hours a week, and resident assistants hold weekly drop-in sessions, report problems or concerns to the Residential Life staff, and support social, cultural and other activities. They arrive in advance of the programme, receive on-site training in addition to that delivered on appointment, and provide end-of-stay feedback about the overall experience for transmission to the Student Life team. Other University appointments include Student Senate international ambassadors, who act as a voice for students on behalf of the University, reporting back to the Student Senate about provision; global international ambassadors, who work with the University's Office of Global Programs to help plan pre-departure activities for new students; and careers ambassadors, appointed to support the counsellor who visits London each semester, and to promote and organise relevant events. In all cases support and training are provided.

2.23 Formal representative structures include the Liberal Studies Student Council, which represents and provides highly valued non-academic support for the freshmen, who constitute a minority of the NYUL undergraduate student body, for the whole academic year. A Student Forum contributes to Council meetings, and an all-student Town Hall meeting takes place each semester, when the Director and senior staff respond to questions or concerns. The MA programme does not have a formal representative committee given the small numbers (nine) involved, but staff-student contact is almost daily. Students expressed complete satisfaction with this arrangement, and confirmed that all issues raised lead to appropriate action.

2.24 The review team found these arrangements well organised, realistic and fit for purpose. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.25 NYUL works closely with University academic departments to ensure that standards of assessment are the same as those on all of NYU's degree-awarding campuses. Each home department has a global coordinator, many of whom sit on the London Site Specific Advisory Committee, the minutes of which demonstrate that new academic programmes and the provision of additional assessment in global learning outcomes are given full consideration. Global coordinators are tasked with ensuring consistency of academic standards and that all courses slot into the aggregate of courses making up the degree. All course outlines and syllabi produced or adopted by NYUL teaching staff are either produced collaboratively with the home department or reviewed for equitability by that department. The global coordinator or another departmental representative visits London periodically to meet local faculty, observe teaching and review coursework.

2.26 As noted in paragraph 1.5, locally appointed faculty undertake marking on the basis of induction, detailed training and support; marks are subject to internal monitoring and University approval, and faculty members confirmed the effectiveness of these procedures. The work of students on the exchange agreement with the School of Oriental and African Studies (see paragraph 1.2) is assessed by the School, NYU converting numerical marks to the University's grading system on the basis of an agreed algorithm. Students confirmed their understanding of the assessment criteria and that, in general, feedback is helpful and timely, albeit that they are not aware of any formal requirements in relation to turnaround times.

2.27 Policy and procedures on academic integrity are explained to students at orientation and provided in written form, both as hard copy and online; freshmen are required to undertake an online tutorial explaining academic integrity, standards and practices; and students confirmed their familiarity with the requirements concerned (see also paragraph 1.3). Staff review coursework and essays through plagiarism-detection software; clear procedures are in place for dealing with plagiarism; and NYUL plans to implement a more formal process for recording and tracking academic integrity cases in the future. These arrangements were analysed in detail by the review team and found to be robust and fit for purpose.

2.28 The review team found that NYUL discharges its assessment responsibilities in an effective manner. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.29 In accordance with University practice, external examiners are not used to scrutinise student assessment. The Expectation is therefore not applicable.

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

2.30 NYUL and NYUTL have an integrated governance and management structure to oversee academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. As well as being required to adhere to the University's policies and procedures, all study away sites are subject to review by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. NYUL works closely with University staff in the Office of Global Programs and with academic departments to ensure consistency of standards and provision; the Directors of NYUL and NYUTL both have biannual meetings in New York; other staff from the London site also regularly attend briefing and review meetings there; and University faculty and staff also make regular visits to London for quality management purposes (see paragraph 2.9). Courses at NYUL are also subject to scrutiny and review by the London Site Specific Advisory Committee, and NYUTL's programme is subject to regular review by the Film and TV International Curriculum Committee and the Tisch Curriculum Committee.

2.31 Student course evaluations are a regular and successful feature of quality management; feedback is also elicited through the structures and individuals enumerated above (see paragraph 2.21). Academic programmes are monitored through a network of meetings, reviews and discussions involving trustees, staff, students and faculty in London, as well as by faculty and staff from across the global network. Annual reports are provided to the Board of Trustees, which meets biannually to scrutinise all aspects of the programmes and review reports and developments.

2.32 NYUL regards the twice-semester faculty meetings as important, not least because of points of contact between part-time faculty and the administration staff; this view seems not to be universally shared, however, as NYUL is currently addressing the problem of low attendance. The Faculty Liaison Panel, an elected body of five faculty members, also holds meetings with faculty and invites them to submit concerns or suggestions; these are then discussed with NYUL managers. The Chair of this Panel has a standing agenda item to provide faculty meetings with feedback, and faculty commented positively on the Panel's effectiveness, noting, for example, a useful recent discussion to resolve the variable application of penalties for late submission of work for assessment.

2.33 The review team finds that NYUL discharges its responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities appropriately and effectively. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.34 The University is committed to ensuring that students are aware of how to raise a grievance or dispute an awarded grade, and as well as being explained at orientation, the Grievance Policy, policies on inclusivity and diversity, and the Grade Dispute Policy are available both on the Office of Global Programs website and in the Essentials Handbook provided to all students. For NYUTL students the grade dispute procedure is explained in the University's Tisch Handbook for Academic Policies When Studying Away; MA students are provided with details of procedures for grade disputes and for appealing against probation or termination for insufficient progress.

2.35 A student with a grade concern initially approaches the relevant member of faculty or any staff member in the Academic Office. The Assistant Director mediates, and, if deemed appropriate, the faculty member is asked to re-evaluate the grade. Where necessary a second marker is brought in to help resolve any dispute: in the first instance this is normally another suitable faculty member at NYUL or, if this is not possible, a suitable faculty member of another NYU campus, who is identified with the assistance of the NYU Global Office. These arrangements are understood by students.

2.36 While the University has a procedure for students to make non-academic complaints and supports the study away sites in addressing issues, the fact that NYUL has no systematised complaint process for non-academic matters is currently under discussion; staff currently receive training mainly by video conference. A range of local opportunities for students to raise concerns does, however, exist: Town Hall meetings, informal contact with faculty or support staff, end-of-semester evaluations, a suggestion/complaints box, and, for relevant students (see paragraph 2.22), the Liberal Studies Student Council. For serious matters students can invoke the University's formal grievance procedure. In addition, Student Life staff scan entries on social media and bring serious concerns raised there to the attention of senior managers. Students confirmed that they are aware of these arrangements.

2.37 Policies for complaints and appeals are largely matters for the University and therefore out of scope. NYUL's responsibilities for disseminating and explaining them are appropriately discharged. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.38 NYUL has a longstanding exchange agreement with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which enables students from each institution to take courses under the auspices of the other. The review team noted that the agreement is not signed or dated; the University may perhaps wish to formalise this. The agreement offers NYUL students access to five courses in African Studies, which are managed according to SOAS's academic standards, policies and procedures, approved by the University as conforming to its credit requirements, and assessed with the aid of a mark conversion algorithm.

2.39 NYUTL collaborates with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA; see paragraph 1.2), which teaches a core Performance in Shakespeare course. All arrangements are agreed and confirmed at regular meetings; the NYUTL Director is involved in induction and collaborates in relevant RADA staff appointments; and Tisch School of Performing Arts staff and faculty visit RADA to observe classes and review provision.

2.40 NYUL's partnership arrangement with EUSA, another study-abroad organisation, involves EUSA taking responsibility for internships subject to monitoring by the Office of Global Programs. EUSA staff work closely with Global Programs staff, attending pre-departure meetings to meet students and reporting regularly to the Office of Global Programs and NYUL for quality management and visa monitoring purposes. The review team noted that the University has used this partnership as a model for developing equivalent opportunities to other sites, and identified the effectiveness of the NYU internship programme as good practice (see paragraph 2.18).

2.41 In order to provide appropriate placements for a Human Development course for student teachers, NYUL engages with the Education-Training-Citizenship organisation to organise and manage placements, induct students, hold reflective sessions and report on attendance. NYUL staff meet the relevant coordinator for monitoring purposes and a final debriefing.

2.42 Arrangements to secure appropriate academic standards and widen learning opportunities are managed through agreed procedures for course provision or formal contracts for placement or internship learning.

2.43 The review team tested the implementation and management of learning opportunities provided, and other than in respect of a lack of formality underpinning one agreement, found the procedures fit for purpose. The Expectation is met and the 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

2.44 NYUL does not supervise research degree students. Therefore, this Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.46 This section of the report contains three features of good practice and one recommendation. The former relate to: (i) auditioning and selection procedures for NYUTL students, where the review team noted in particular the meticulous attention paid to investing considerable resources to ensure that a fair and constructive approach is taken to what is for applicants a challenging experience in an intensely competitive situation; (ii) the management of internships, which are carefully designed to complement students' own learning objectives; and (iii) the support, academic and personal, given to students by teaching faculty, NYUL staff, and a range of appointed student officers to ensure that their time in London is, in both these respects, fruitful and enjoyable. The recommendation relates to an inconsistency with which teaching faculty currently make use of the virtual learning environment, which the team believes could be resolved in such a way as to ensure the realisation of the potential benefits of this technological teaching support.

2.47 Overall, NYUL has demonstrated that it pays close attention to the quality of student learning opportunities, and the students who met the review team, all of whom were from a single United States university, were unanimous in their satisfaction with all aspects of their experience, and with the reassurance about their safety and security available to their parents and families. All relevant Expectations are met, and in all cases the element of risk involved is classified as low. The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at NYU in London **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 University is responsible for the accuracy of recruitment and admissions information, which is managed on its behalf by the Office of Global Programs and relevant academic departments. NYUL staff liaise with their University counterparts both to discuss and check the accuracy of information in the public domain and to participate in pre-departure meetings in New York and elsewhere to clarify any points of uncertainty among prospective students. The University's Global Programs website contains mainly generic, promotional, procedural and regulatory materials and news about current developments at the study away sites; to complement this it provides a link to academic centres, including NYUL, to enable students to access more detailed local information.

3.2 The NYUL website provides extensive and relevant information about courses, faculty, staff, facilities, student life, living in London and the application and admissions procedures. Both the Department of Art History and the Tisch School of the Arts maintain their own websites; all prospective students are therefore able to access course details and enrolment status to enable them to complete registration efficiently. Website information is reviewed and updated regularly, with responsibility for making changes resting with the relevant Assistant Director.

3.3 Students receive a printed brochure, published in New York but checked for accuracy by NYUL; they have the opportunity to attend pre-departure meetings to discuss arrangements with London-based staff and, where an internship is scheduled, staff of EUSA (see paragraph 2.39). On arrival they participate in a five-day orientation period, which has recently been amended in the light of mixed evaluations. Details of the bespoke orientation arrangements for freshmen and upperclassmen are readily available and appear coherent and logical.

3.4 Information about cultural trips and activities to support experiential learning is distributed in hard copy; Student Life and Academic Affairs staff monitor social media platforms, and increasingly use them for communicating with students, though emails continue to be the main communication method. End-of-semester evaluations include questions about the accuracy and value of communications, and responses are reviewed for enhancement purposes.

3.5 The review team scrutinised published information about NYUL's educational provision and met senior staff, faculty and students, finding, on the basis of these meetings, that the quality of information about learning opportunities is accurate and fit for purpose. The Expectation is met and the 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 about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.7 NYUL has effective procedures to ensure that all the information it publishes, for the public, for prospective students and for current students, on its website and as hard copy, is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.8 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at NYU in London **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 As an integral part of New York University, NYUL's capacity for strategic enhancement is inevitably circumscribed. It identifies its approach in terms of information-led activity, and there is evidence that where it is empowered to do so NYUL responds deliberately and at provider level to issues arising and suggestions made. It is not, however, in a position to produce a Strategic Plan or Enhancement Policy outside of the institutional context within which it operates, and its capacity for strategic redirection is therefore limited. It is in this context that the review team examined the extent to which NYUL can be said to be taking deliberate steps at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

4.2 NYUL cites a range of information sources as guiding its approach to quality enhancement. These include student evaluations and meetings, and the information it provides to institutional bodies, in particular the University as the decision-making body. It states that it uses this information to identify the need for changes, additions or developments at both site level and within the context of University requirements. Some of the examples of enhancement initiatives it cites are the London Site Specific Advisory Committee; providing extra training support for local faculty; making changes to the orientation programme in response to student comment; the availability of full-time specialist counselling expertise on site, a writing skills workshop; development of the Faculty Liaison Panel; and integration of administration support for NYUL and NYUTL.

4.3 NYUL and NYUTL aim to provide a holistic student learning experience combining academic studies with a range of other cocurricular opportunities, including guest speakers, visits to performances, sites and events and themed activity weeks. NYUTL has a close relationship with RADA and the theatrical and storytelling professions, and aims to give students a clear view of the options open to them on graduation. NYUL and NYUTL also take a strategic approach to enhancing students' employability skills through various means; these include engagement with the University's Wasserman Centre for Career Development, which supports student workshops and career counselling provision in London, NYUL's volunteering programme designed to promote integration into UK life and culture, the Leadership Exploration and Development through Service (LEADS) programme which further develops students' awareness of the benefits of volunteering, and through offering students positions of responsibility (including student residence assistants, student workers attached to the Student Life and Academic Affairs Departments, student ambassadors and Student Council representatives) to enhance leadership skills. Some students also have an opportunity to take up an internship.

4.4 The review team gave careful consideration to the approach to quality enhancement presented by NYUL, noting that while it largely took the form of a list of activities and achievements, it cannot be said that these are other than positive and deliberate steps taken at provider level to improve the quality of student learning opportunities. The team also notes that NYUL has contributed positively to the University's policy development, and that its management of internships through its collaboration with EUSA has been cited as a model for others to follow. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.6 As an integral part of New York University, NYUL is not in a position to produce its own Strategic Plan or Enhancement Policy, but nonetheless takes a firm and deliberate approach to improving the quality of student learning opportunities. In doing so it is guided by information sources which it uses to identify the need for change or development. The initiatives deriving therefrom include enhancing students' employability skills in a range of imaginative and innovative ways (its management of internships has been cited by the University as a model for others to follow), providing extra targeted training and support for local faculty, making changes to the orientation programme in response to student comment, providing full-time specialist counselling expertise, and initiating a writing skills workshop.

4.7 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at NYU in London **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 NYUL, while its undergraduate students do not graduate directly but continue their studies elsewhere, shares the University's aim to improve employability skills and contribute to developing careers opportunities. To this end NYUL engages with the University's Wasserman Centre for Career Development, which supports student workshops and career counselling provision in London; it welcomes visits from the University's Careers Counsellor to highlight the personal development aspects of studying abroad and link transferable and personal experiences to the London context; assisted by two trained student careers ambassadors it promotes and organises employment-related events; it encourages University alumni to participate in mentoring and guiding current students; and it monitors and responds to student evaluations of these events.

5.2 The MA Historical and Sustainable Architecture, the only programme producing graduates directly from NYUL, is designed to enable access to careers in urban planning and real estate development. Courses are taught by leading practitioners in architecture and design, and the programme incorporates fieldwork training. Some two-thirds of graduates are employed in relevant activities by a wide range of government, real estate, cultural and historic sites agencies.

5.3 NYUL's volunteering programme is designed to promote integration into UK life and culture. Students receive certificates (gold, silver or bronze) for the number of hours they devote to volunteer work. These activities, for which students are trained, have become popular, are reviewed by staff using student feedback, and encourage students to list their experiences in their curricula vitae. The Leadership Exploration and Development through Service (LEADS) programme, which commenced in 2015, further develops students' awareness of the benefits of volunteering, and now involves engagement with professionals to offer advice and guidance in varied fields of employment.

5.4 As noted in paragraph 2.21, NYUL and NYUTL seek to inculcate a work ethic by offering students positions of responsibility to enhance leadership skills. Students also have an opportunity to take the internship programme in partnership with EUSA, based on a credit-bearing internship seminar class and the co-requisite internship work experience. Currently, 25 students follow the internship programme, participation in which is determined competitively.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers.

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.

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