



Oak Hill College

Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

June 2012

Key findings about Oak Hill College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of Middlesex University.

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

The team considers that **reliance** can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

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

- the extensive student engagement in the College's committees provides effective opportunities for students to identify, discuss and analyse emerging issues (paragraphs 1.2, 1.8 and 2.6)
- the highly supportive academic and pastoral learning environment (paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11)
- the highly effective work placement support and guidance for students and staff (paragraph 2.18)

Recommendations

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

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- ensure that moderation and second marking is undertaken consistently at all levels of study (paragraph 1.10)
- introduce a clear and comprehensive strategy for providing assessment feedback (paragraph 2.4)

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

- provide a more clearly defined overview of quality assurance and enhancement processes (paragraph 1.3)
- develop comprehensive module-specific assessment criteria which are consistently linked to intended learning outcomes (paragraph 1.9)
- consider ways to improve the response rate for module and programme student evaluations (paragraph 2.5)
- introduce a teaching and learning strategy to support various modes of study, and undertake more formal monitoring of teaching quality (paragraph 2.7 and 2.8)
- take a more systematic approach to staff development and the mentoring of new staff (paragraph 2.14)

- formalise the policy on the management of the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.17)
- clarify the processes for the management of public information and provide a clear reporting structure (paragraph 3.8)

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Oak Hill College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Middlesex University. The review was carried out by Seth Crofts, Kausar Malik and Clive Marsland (reviewers), and Simon Ives (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding body, meetings with staff and students and reports of reviews by the Churches' Quality in Formation Framework on behalf of the Church of England.

This review formed part of a linked series of review visits to six theology colleges training ordinands and laity for Anglican, Methodist and Baptist Churches. The colleges underwent a common preparation process for the visits which were carried out by two teams. Reports are made individually on each college and reflect their diverse organisation and character.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the requirements of Middlesex University

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

Oak Hill College (the College) was established in 1932 as part of the Kingham Hill Trust as an Anglican theological college providing training for the ordained ministry. The stated mission is to 'serve churches worldwide as they carry out the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, by equipping their people to serve with a grasp of God's revealed truth that is adaptable, deep, broad and integrated'.

The College has a long history of delivering higher education, and has a single campus at Southgate in north London with residential accommodation for staff and students. Initially, the College worked in conjunction with the Council for National Academic Awards. Since 1992 it has been in a highly effective partnership with Middlesex University. Over the last 20 years the College has expanded considerably and extended the range and level of its academic delivery. The College delivers higher education programmes at levels 4 to 7 on *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). There are currently 109 full-time students and 32 studying part-time, a total of 141 students.

At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body with full-time equivalent student number in brackets:

Middlesex University

- Certificate of Higher Education in Theology (5)
- Foundation Degree of Arts in Theology (17)

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

- Certificate of Higher Education in Theological and Pastoral Studies (1)
- Diploma of Higher Education in Theological and Pastoral Studies (7)
- BA (Hons) in Theological and Pastoral Studies (58)
- MTh in Theological and Pastoral Studies (11)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies (4)
- MA in Theological and Pastoral Studies (3)
- Diploma of Higher Education in Theology and World Mission (3)
- BA (Hons) in Theology and World Mission (4)
- MTh in Theology and World Mission (1)
- Diploma of Higher Education in Youth and Children's Ministry (1)
- BA (Hons) in Youth and Children's Ministry (8)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College is an Associate College of Middlesex University, and has extensive delegated responsibilities for the management of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. The College is accredited to validate, monitor and review programmes in theological and pastoral studies, youth and children's ministry and theology and world mission, leading to qualifications of the University. It is also responsible for the recruitment and admission of students, programme delivery, assessment and internal moderation, the quality of teaching and learning, the provision of appropriate staffing and physical resources, application of the awarding body's standards, regular internal monitoring of quality, and compliance with the awarding body's requirements for annual evaluation and review. Middlesex University conducts a process of institutional re-accreditation every six years.

The provision at the College is subject to review and approval under the provisions of the Churches' Quality in Formation Framework developed through the cooperation of the Ministry Division of the Church of England, Methodist, Baptist Union and United Reformed Churches. This provides a comprehensive review of academic standards and involves benchmarking against similar provision.

Recent developments

Two new programmes were delivered for the first time in 2011-12; the Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, and the FdA in Theology. In 2012-13 these programmes will also be available through distance learning. Significant changes have recently been made to the structure of the academic year, and in 2011-12 the College moved from a two semester model to three term delivery. Although most students were able to transfer to the new model, some students, mainly those in their second year, continued in the two semester structure. This change placed considerable strain on the academic and support staff, although students generally confirmed that this transition had been well managed by the College.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. The College briefed student representatives on the review process through the Student Committee. The production of the student submission was facilitated by the College, and focused on general experiences at the College and responses from individual programmes. These were drawn together by student representatives and circulated to the study body for comment and amendment prior to final submission. Students were offered support and guidance throughout the process, but were given complete editorial control over the final submission. They confirmed at a meeting with the team that

they had contributed to the student submission and agreed with the comments it expressed. Students met reviewers during the review visits and at the briefing meeting, and the team found their views helpful in informing their discussions.

Detailed findings about Oak Hill College

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has effective structures and processes for fulfilling its responsibilities for managing academic standards. It has a well developed mission statement that staff strongly identify with. The strategic plan is fully embedded and provides guidance in relation to the priorities and general direction of the College. This document focuses heavily on the College's philosophical direction, but provides less information on its operational priorities and measurable goals. However, the team found that staff worked closely to ensure that an effective student experience is delivered and much emphasis is placed upon ensuring consistent academic standards that support a high level of student achievement.

1.2 The College operates an effective committee and deliberative meeting structure that allows for detailed discussions in relation to academic standards. This includes the College Council, Academic Board, the Courses Evaluation Committee and Assessment Board. The College Council exercises ultimate responsibility for the management of academic standards, and includes representatives of the Church of England, the Kingham Hill Trust and College staff. Representatives of the student body are fully represented and engage well with key College committees, feeling that their contributions are valued. The team found that a detailed review of course delivery and student experience is achieved through the effective committee process. This process includes a thorough review of student feedback, and careful consideration is given to external examiners' reports ensuring that appropriate action is taken in response.

1.3 The College has a clear leadership structure in which the Principal assumes overall responsibility for academic standards. Operational responsibility for programme implementation and delivery is delegated to the Academic Dean, supported by the Academic Registrar, who has a significant role in relation to the management of assessment. The College has recently appointed an Academic Quality Assurance Officer who has a key role in the management of validation and review activity, and liaising with Middlesex University. The post-holder works in close collaboration with the Academic Dean and Registrar. The review team found that this appointment has raised the profile of quality assurance activity within the College and is appreciated by the academic and administrative staff. However, the job role would benefit from a clearer articulation of responsibilities for oversight of quality assurance and enhancement within the College. The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to provide a more clearly defined overview of quality assurance and enhancement processes and further develop the role of the Academic Quality Assurance Officer.

1.4 The responsibilities of the College and the validating body are set out in a series of Instruments of Association and Accreditation and in a detailed Memorandum of Cooperation. These provide clear and extensive guidance in respect of the responsibilities of each party, and are well understood by staff across the College. As an accredited partner of Middlesex University the College enjoys significant devolved authority, including responsibility for validating taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and the management of academic standards. The College undertakes this role effectively. The partnership is overseen by a Joint Management Group comprising senior members of the College and the University which meets twice a year. The partnership is also usefully supported by an Accreditation Link Tutor, appointed from within the University.

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

1.5 The College engages with all elements of the Academic Infrastructure, including the use of subject benchmark statements and *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). College staff are fully aware of external reference points, and each programme is designed taking account of relevant subject benchmark statements. This process ensures that programme specifications are clear, appropriate to the level of study, and provide an excellent resource for the students and staff. Academic staff identified how they used a range of external reference points in course design, including the application of several sets of subject benchmark statements when developing the BA (Hons) Youth and Children's Ministry. The recent review of postgraduate provision undertaken by the University confirmed that staff fully understand the academic expectation of teaching on programmes at masters level. The monitoring required by the Quality in Formation Framework provides an additional external reference point and helps ensure consistency between this provision and similar theological education delivered by other higher education institutions

1.6 Academic and support staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the expectations set out within the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*) and are able to demonstrate how the application of various sections have been used to enhance provision. For example *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning* was used to guide the development of the College's newly developed e-learning provision. The team found that the extensive discussions between the College and Middlesex University in relation to the use of external reference points, including the Academic Infrastructure and the University's own requirements, have ensured that College staff are well informed and understand their responsibilities.

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

1.7 The College engages extensively with its external examiners, and examiners' reports and annual monitoring processes confirm that the College meets the requirements of its awarding body. External examiners' reports confirm that academic standards and student achievement are comparable to those at other institutions. The College provides thorough responses and action plans which address external examiners' comments.

1.8 The College produces an overarching annual monitoring report that reports on the range of programmes across the undergraduate and postgraduate portfolios. This report provides an effective review of student performance and addresses issues raised by students and external examiners. There is thorough analysis of the data provided on student achievement. Annual monitoring reports are considered at the relevant committees and are forwarded with actions to Middlesex University. There is a systematic approach to course evaluation, and feedback from students is dealt with comprehensively by the Courses Evaluation Committee.

1.9 The College has established detailed procedures for the marking and second marking of students' assessed work, and the operation of external examining. These requirements are well understood by academic and administrative staff. The review team found that assessment feedback is generally detailed and constructive. Most feedback provides useful developmental indicators for students to guide them on how to improve their academic performance. Students value the feedback they receive on assessed work, and most assessment feedback shows clearly how it relates to the marking criteria.

However, students also commented that assessment criteria could be made more explicit, and it was not clear to the team how assessment feedback is mapped against the learning outcomes. The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to develop comprehensive module-specific assessment criteria and to provide feedback on assessed work which is consistently linked to intended learning outcomes.

1.10 There is no policy for the internal moderation or second marking of student work at levels 4 and 5, and this has not been made a requirement of programme validation. Students are entitled to leave with exit awards at these levels and significant reliance is placed upon the external examiner to sample the work and provide assurance that consistent standards are being applied. The team considers that it is advisable for the College to review the policies and procedures for moderation and second marking to ensure that this is consistently undertaken at all levels of study.

1.11 The College has recently validated a Certificate in Higher Education and an Foundation Degree of Arts in Theology for study at a distance, commencing in 2012-13. The development of online delivery represents a significant change in educational approach. The College is taking a cautious approach to this development and is aware that its quality assurance processes will need to be revised to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

1.12 All programmes are subject to extensive review and revalidation every six years, and responsibility for this has been devolved to the College, with oversight from the University. Middlesex University works closely with the College to ensure that there is a comprehensive review of each programme. Appropriate external subject specialists are involved in programme review and explicit reference is made to external reference points.

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

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The College processes for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are broadly as described for academic standards in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4. The Academic Dean oversees and monitors programme delivery in close liaison with the Principal. The Leadership Team proactively manages the varying requirements of the awarding body, and the College's responsibilities are clearly laid out in the range of agreements with Middlesex University. The College follows the requirements of the University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook. Weekly meetings of teaching staff systematically review teaching and learning activities.

2.2 The College has an effective system of informal and formal communication between students and staff, and students are well represented on key committees. Students value and understand the role of the student representatives and express their satisfaction that their views lead to effective changes in all aspects of the provision. Student involvement in the quality assurance framework is comprehensive and results in significant enhancement of learning opportunities.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.3 The Academic Infrastructure is used and applied in the processes for managing and enhancing learning opportunities. Engagement with various elements of the Academic Infrastructure, including key sections of the *Code of practice*, is outlined in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6. College staff were able to articulate how key policies have been developed and mapped against the expectations of the *Code of practice*, including recruitment and admissions, work-based learning, and external examining.

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

Students are positive about their learning experience and the College has effective arrangements in place to assure that the quality of teaching is maintained and enhanced. Students spoke positively about the learning experience and the variety of teaching and assessment activities they experience. They commented that the learning experience matches their expectations, and that teaching approaches have become more interactive and discursive. They value the range of assessment tasks, which are challenging, and stated that tutors provided clear guidance on requirements and expectations. However, they expressed concerns about delays in the marking of assignments and the distribution of feedback. The College acknowledges that this has been exacerbated by the significant changes to the structure of the academic year with the introduction in 2011-12 of three-term delivery. Students commented that the delays in assessment feedback have sometimes impacted on the opportunity they had to improve before submitting their next assignment. It is advisable for the College to introduce a clear and comprehensive strategy to enable students to receive full and timely feedback on their assessed work.

2.4 There is an effective range of formal mechanisms for students to provide feedback. Students confirmed that staff are very approachable and supportive and keen to respond to suggested improvements in teaching delivery. Module and programme level feedback is gathered formally through student evaluation questionnaires, although the response rate for these is at times low. The College is aware of the need to address this by redesigning the form for use in paper or electronic format, and managing the submission process more closely. The team consider it desirable for the College to consider ways to improve the response rate for module and programme student evaluations.

2.5 The Course Evaluation Committee provides effective opportunities for students to raise and address all aspects of programme delivery and the student experience. Student representatives are fully involved in reviewing the feedback evaluations, and use this as a means of raising key issues to be addressed. Recent examples of concerns raised at the committee include timeliness of assessment feedback, the use of group work, and student workload. Students feel that matters raised are considered seriously by staff, and actions to address these are put in place. The extensive student engagement in the College's committees provides effective opportunities for students to identify, discuss and analyse emerging issues, and is good practice.

2.6 The existing Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy provides some guidance for staff. However, the College is aware that this is currently under-developed and its use as an active vehicle for guidance on current learning and teaching approaches has fallen into abeyance. An overhaul of the policy is planned for 2012-13 which is intended to incorporate strategies for new forms of delivery such as distance learning, and the use of the virtual learning environment. These areas are not fully addressed in the current strategy. In 2011-12 significant changes were made to the structure of the teaching year, moving from

two semesters to three terms. This was primarily done to accommodate the needs of newly validated programmes. During the current year both models have run, with some continuing students working to the original semester timetable. The College acknowledges that this transition has made for significant disruption during the current academic year. Students stated that they had been well informed of the changes and that they felt the current difficulties would be rectified for the start of the new year.

2.7 The College operates a peer observation system through a tutor pairing arrangement, and team teaching also takes place in some modules. The academic dean selects a different twin each academic year, and each member of the teaching staff is twin-observed at least twice annually. Staff meet afterwards to discuss the outcomes, and the staff twin reviews the module student evaluations for that teacher. However, there is no formal cross-college process for monitoring the outcomes of the peer observation process, although discussion takes place individually during annual appraisal. The team consider it is desirable to introduce and implement an effective teaching and learning strategy to support various modes of study, and undertake more formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching quality.

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

2.9 There are highly effective arrangements for ensuring students are supported both formally and informally. All students receive an interview prior to enrolment, and many attend a micro teaching day where they can meet staff and attend lectures. Students commented that the application process was supportive and effective, and they value the open days, which they feel provide a realistic understanding of the College's expectations. There is good advice and guidance and students are able to transfer between different modes and programmes of study and find this very responsive to their personal and professional circumstances.

2.10 Students feel that they are highly valued members of a small community with excellent pastoral, academic and welfare support from highly accessible staff and peers. The primary source of individual pastoral, academic and peer support for full-time students is through the Fellowship Groups which meet weekly. Additionally, the personal tutor who leads the Fellowship Group formally meets students individually up to three times a year to discuss their progress. Support is also available through programme directors and course leaders who provide more discipline-based advice and support. Part-time students are not formally part of the Fellowship Groups, although they are effectively supported by the Academic Dean, and the newly appointed Director of Part-time Studies, who will have an increasing role in student support.

2.11 There are sound mechanisms for the provision of additional learning support, and needs are initially ascertained through the application form and at the student's interview. This ensures that students are screened for dyslexia and other learning support needs, and appropriate support and adjustments are made as required. Academic study skills are provided by staff who are readily accessible, and students feel confident that they know how to access academic and pastoral support. The highly supportive learning environment, including the Fellowship Groups, provides regular and structured academic and pastoral support for students and is good practice.

What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.12 The College's self-evaluation acknowledges that further work is required to generate more effective staff development activities. The regular sharing of good practice at

weekly staff meetings has not been maintained during the current academic year because of other demands on staff time. The College has recruited highly qualified academics who maintain active networks in their subject discipline. New staff are mentored primarily through the monitoring of their assessment of students by more experienced staff. Few staff have undertaken teaching qualifications, although recently one member of staff has benefited from enrolment on the Middlesex University Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education. The University has recently made this available in distance learning mode and the College intends to encourage staff to enrol on the programme, or undertake other teaching qualifications.

2.13 The College has a designated budget to support professional development. This provides funding for attendance at conferences and study leave for academic scholarship. These opportunities are highly valued by staff. The use of off-site staff development days has allowed the staff to address specific issues such as new course proposals or the redesign of programmes prior to validation. The agendas for these events would benefit from a focus on broader learning and teaching debates within the higher education sector. This type of developmental event has only taken place once in the current academic year, although the College wishes to extend this further in 2012-13.

2.14 The College benefits from staff development opportunities provided by Middlesex University, some of which have been delivered at the College. Occasionally staff have delivered development sessions to partners and stakeholders. Targeted staff development has taken place in line with the introduction of the virtual learning environment and new distance learning delivery. However, staff are less aware of the key developments in the higher education sector and the opportunities that exist to engage in discussions about pedagogy with colleagues beyond their subject specialist discipline. It is desirable for the College to take a more systematic approach to staff development and the mentoring of new staff, and to encourage wider engagement with developments in the higher education sector.

2.15 Staff appraisal takes places annually with the Principal and relies largely on a self-appraisal model. Goals are set for the next academic year, and requirements for staff development are agreed, although these are not formally monitored. The College's self-evaluation states that it does not consider appraisal to be a robust process. The College is revising the model to provide more realistic and achievable goals which respond proactively to its development needs. The team supports the actions that are being put in place.

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

2.16 The College has a clear business-planning process to ensure that resources are suitable for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Resources are scrutinised in the context of institutional accreditation, programme validation and periodic review by Middlesex University. The annual monitoring process identifies ongoing resource needs and module leaders keep resources under close review and report specifically on gaps in requirements. The majority of students and staff live on the campus, which assists in the development of a supportive learning community. The College houses a significant theological library and is well resourced for all provision. Students are highly satisfied with the stock, 24-hour opening, and individual support provided by library staff. The library also provides links to appropriate online subscription-based databases and e-books and has plans to expand this.

2.17 Students and staff speak positively about the recent introduction of the virtual learning environment. The College acknowledges that there are many additional features which have yet to be embedded, and plans are in place to appoint an additional member of staff to support these developments. This has been developed by a project manager who is also a member of the academic staff team. The virtual learning environment is being used proactively to support learning and teaching, provide accurate and updated programme information on a module-by-module basis, and to serve as an adjunct to the information sources on the College website. Students commented that the virtual learning environment has had teething problems but is now working well. However, students also commented on the variability in the consistency of information available for different modules, and the inconsistent use of the virtual learning environment by staff. The College plans to expand the use of the virtual learning environment, for example in gathering student feedback, the online submission of student work and providing full and consistent teaching materials. However, it acknowledges that it has yet to take full advantage of the full potential of the medium and to establish minimum expectations for use as part of a College e-learning strategy. It is desirable for the College to formalise the policy on the management of the virtual learning environment to enable consistent availability of learning materials for all programmes.

2.18 Students value the extensive advice and guidance on work placement provided by the College. Provision for work placement is exceptional and is available for all college-based students who are matched to placements by the Placement Officers. The work placement officer has very effective systems for placing students in the Ministry. The placement activities are integrated well into the module assessment and effectively prepare students for ministry. International placements are offered to students studying on the FdA Theology and BA (Hons) Theology and World Mission. Relationships with employers are good and students are supervised by the Minister at the placement church. Any arising issues are effectively dealt with by the personal tutors or the placement officer. The work placement support and guidance for students and staff provides effective preparation for those entering the Ministry and is an example of good practice.

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

3 Public information

How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?

3.1 The College publishes a wide range of information about its higher education provision for potential and current students, staff, employers and other stakeholders. This is produced in hard copy and electronic format on its website, which is the primary means of external communication. The information published includes the College's mission, values and ethos statements, its facilities, programmes of study, awards information, entry requirements, application procedures, and careers guidance. The latter is appropriately focused on students entering the Ministry. The College usefully involves existing and past students in presenting some of this information in user-friendly video format.

3.2 Marketing materials, in the form of targeted advertisements, flyers, appeals documentation and prospectuses, are available in electronic and paper formats, and are used consistently at promotional events such as open mornings. The College's information

for prospective students is made available by means of the brochure, which acts as the College's prospectus, the website and individual course brochures and these are supplemented by an application pack which helpfully contains detailed application information. The review team found that materials given to students are informative and accurate.

3.3 The College's published information aims to reinforce its profile both as a centre for study in theology, and its wider theological and spiritual reach. Information is of a high standard, and includes *Commentary* magazine, a College blog, and seminar and lecture series. These are made available to external parties online.

3.4 Programme specifications and programme handbooks provide full information on teaching, learning, assessment, and additional study support. Much of this information is also available in hard copy. The published information available on the website and in hard copy is straightforward, clear and easy to navigate. The website benefits from a regular monthly updating process.

How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.5 Responsibilities for publishing and ensuring the accuracy of publication are shared between the College and Middlesex University. The College meets the requirements of its awarding body in relation to all programme-specific documentation for awards it delivers. Public information related to all programmes of study leading to Middlesex University awards is subject to systematic production, scrutiny and monitoring procedures operated by the College and the University. This ensures information is accurate and complete.

3.6 The University stipulates conditions for advertising programmes of study, and these are managed appropriately by the College in conjunction with the Accreditation Link Tutor. Middlesex University is able to exercise its right to check all documentation relating to its awards, and the College facilitates this process. This systematically ensures that the College is fulfilling its obligations as outlined in the partnership agreements.

3.7 Electronic content on the website and virtual learning environment is uploaded following a clear process of checking for accuracy. The College has an appropriate timeline, outlining the stages and timescales in which key information is uploaded onto the website and the monthly updating process also checks for accuracy. The virtual learning environment is checked by the relevant senior member of the academic staff. The College takes deliberate steps to safeguard both its students and staff for data protection. It is currently updating its data protection policy and procedures to ensure that they are in line with current legislation.

3.8 The College does not have a formalised information strategy or a public information policy. However, areas of responsibility for the strategic oversight of the accuracy of public information within the College are understood informally. While the Principal has overall responsibility for the quality and accuracy of public information, operational and day-to-day responsibility is devolved to the Development Manager. The overall accuracy of learning materials and academic programme information is the responsibility of the Academic Dean who devolves day-to-day responsibility to course teams. Checks on accuracy of external publications are made by the Development Manager, the Vice Principal and the Academic Registrar, and the Academic Quality Assurance Officer. While these checks are currently effective, a clearer structure for responsibilities for respective areas would be of benefit to the College. It is desirable for the College to formalise the processes for the strategic

management and dissemination of public information and to provide a clear reporting structure.

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Action plan³

Oak Hill College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight June 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extensive student engagement in the College's committees provides effective opportunities for students to identify, discuss and analyse emerging issues (paragraphs 1.2, 1.8 and 2.6) 	Development of a section on the virtual learning environment devoted to student engagement: (a) identifying student representatives, (b) advertising meetings, (c) giving feedback from those meetings, and (d) encouraging greater student engagement	End of term one 2012-13 (12 December 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer	Presence of a virtual learning environment page with the requisite information, kept up-to-date throughout the rest of the academic year	Courses Evaluation Committee	Brief survey at the end of the academic year, asking returning students (that is to say students who are not new this year) whether the new page and the information shared there has helped them to engage more with quality assurance processes (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the highly supportive academic and pastoral learning environment (paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11) 	<p>Review of Fellowship Group policy and practice to see how fellowship groups could be made more effective</p>	<p>End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)</p>	<p>Academic Vice Principal and Faculty</p>	<p>Updated process for fellowship groups, to be implemented during the academic year 2013-14</p>	<p>Faculty Meeting</p>	<p>Review at a Faculty Meeting towards the end of the 2013-14 academic year to see whether the new policy has made a difference (Academic Vice Principal)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the highly effective work placement support and guidance for students and staff (paragraph 2.18) 	<p>As part of the forthcoming BA Honours programme review, exploration of how to extend the use of integrated work placements into the BA Hons programme</p>	<p>End of December 2013 (probable date for BA Honours review)</p>	<p>Academic Vice Principal and Placement Officers</p>	<p>Information on the role of integrated work placements in the BA Honours programme to be included in the new programme documentation</p>	<p>Programme Planning Team for the Review (to be confirmed)</p>	<p>During 2014-15, review of the effectiveness of these work placements as part of the regular termly reviews of teaching and learning at Faculty Meetings (Academic Vice Principal)</p> <p>Review of the programme as a whole as part of the College's regular validation and review cycle (Programme Planning Team)</p>

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that moderation and second marking is undertaken consistently at all levels of study (paragraph 1.10) 	<p>Agreement with faculty of an acceptable level of sampling across all levels of study</p> <p>Creation of pairings for sampling and preparation of instructions for all</p>	<p>31 November 2012</p> <p>End of term one 2012-13 (12 December 2012)</p>	<p>Academic Vice Principal</p> <p>Academic Vice Principal</p>	<p>A clear process which allows for effective sampling at all levels</p> <p>Clear instructions prepared and issued to faculty on time</p>	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Review of work submitted to the examiners to ensure that sampling has taken place (Academic Vice Principal)</p> <p>Review of marks sheets to see the extent to which marks were changed as a result (Academic Vice Principal)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a clear and comprehensive strategy for providing assessment feedback (paragraph 2.4) 	<p>Agreement with faculty of deadlines for the return of feedback at the end of each term's marking period during 2012-13</p> <p>Addition of those deadlines to the academic calendar for 2012-13</p>	<p>Done (faculty Meeting, 4 July 2012)</p> <p>Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 September 2012)</p>	<p>Academic Registrar</p> <p>Academic Registrar</p>	<p>Identification of a clear deadline for the return of assessed work at the end of each term during 2012-13</p> <p>Publication of all three deadlines in the academic calendar 2012-13</p>	<p>Academic Vice Principal</p> <p>Academic Vice Principal</p>	<p>Confirmation from faculty that work was returned within the specified period (Academic Vice Principal)</p> <p>Discussion with student representatives to ensure that students were content with the</p>

	<p>Communication of each term's deadline to students as part of the assessment package for each module</p> <p>Monitoring of those deadlines and periodic reminders to Faculty as they approach</p>	<p>Beginning of each new term 2012-13</p> <p>End of each term 2012-13</p>	<p>All Faculty with Academic Registrar</p> <p>Academic Registrar with Academic Vice Principal</p>	<p>Clear statement of the deadline for returning assessed work in the assessment package for each module</p> <p>All assessed work returned to students within four working weeks of the college coursework deadline (five weeks in term two)</p>	<p>Academic Vice Principal</p> <p>Courses Evaluation Committee (as a formal response to previous discussions)</p>	<p>timeliness of feedback (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)</p> <p>Review of student evaluation forms which, from 2012-13, will have a new question on timely return of assessed work (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)</p>
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a more clearly defined overview of quality assurance and enhancement processes (paragraph 1.3) 	Development of a section on the virtual learning environment devoted to student engagement (see good practice section) which will additionally outline related quality assurance processes	End of term one 2012-13 (12 Dec 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer	Presence of a virtual learning environment page with the requisite information, kept up-to-date throughout the rest of academic year	Courses Evaluation Committee	Brief survey at the end of the academic year, asking returning students (students who are not new this year) whether the new page and the information shared there has

	Revision of the <i>Quality Assurance</i> section of the College Handbooks to outline the College's quality assurance processes more clearly for students	Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 September 2012)	Academic Registrar with Academic Quality Assurance Officer	Updated sections in each Handbook, agreed in advance with the Academic Vice Principal	Academic Vice Principal	helped them to be more aware of quality assurance activity at College (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)
	Addition of a new section within the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to outline (a) how quality assurance is done, and (b) how the College will seek to enhance quality	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Academic Vice Principal with Academic Quality Assurance Officer	New section added as part of a wider update of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, to be formally approved by the Academic Board before the end of the academic year	Academic Board	To be reviewed as part of the brief survey mentioned above (Academic Quality Assurance Officer) Confirmation that the Academic Board is satisfied with the provisions made in the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (at its final meeting of the year) (Academic Vice Principal)
	Clarification of the	End of academic year	Academic Vice Principal	New, more detailed, job	Leadership Team	Review of the new role during

	precise roles and responsibilities of the Academic Quality Assurance Officer	2012-13 (12 Jul 2013)	with Academic Quality Assurance Officer	description agreed by the Leadership Team		appraisals with the Academic Vice Principal in 2012-13 and 2013-14 (Academic Vice Principal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop comprehensive module-specific assessment criteria which are consistently linked to intended learning outcomes (paragraph 1.9) 	<p>Review modules to ensure that assessment tasks are testing the intended learning outcomes</p> <p>Reminder from the Academic Vice Principal that faculty should make clear reference to the learning outcomes and the marking</p>	<p>Before the start of each term 2012-13</p> <p>End of each term (2012-13)</p>	<p>All Faculty</p> <p>Academic Vice Principal</p>	<p>Amendment of assessment tasks as required at the relevant Academic Board meeting</p> <p>Clarification that examiners are happy with the assessment tasks in relation to the learning outcomes</p> <p>Reminder issued by the Academic Vice Principal towards the end of each term</p>	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Assessment Board Assessment Board</p>	<p>Acceptance by the Academic Board of revised module descriptions where necessary (Academic Vice Principal)</p> <p>Confirmation in the Examiners' Reports for the academic year 2012-13 that they are happy with the way in which assessment packages engage with learning outcomes</p> <p>Review of work submitted to the examiners to ensure that feedback references the learning</p>

	grids in their feedback, and sign and date it					outcomes and marking criteria, is clear and has been signed (Academic Vice Principal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider ways to improve the response rate for module and programme student evaluations (paragraph 2.5) 	Development of a new student evaluation form (for modules and programmes) which asks more targeted questions and is easier to complete	Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 Sept 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer with Student Academic Representative	New forms accepted by the faculty and subsequently by the Courses Evaluation Committee (at its first meeting of the year)	Faculty Meeting and then Courses Evaluation Committee	Review of the response rate at both module and programme level at the end of the academic year 2012-13: the aim will be for a 10% increase in feedback received as against 2011-12 (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)
	Development of a new (electronic) process for the completion and analysis of student evaluation forms	Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 Sept 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer with Student Academic Representative	New process accepted by the faculty and subsequently by the Courses Evaluation Committee (at its first meeting of the year)	Faculty Meeting and then Courses Evaluation Committee	
	Implementation of the new process during the academic year 2012-13	End of term one 2012-13 (12 Dec 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer	New forms sent out according to the new process towards the end of term one	Courses Evaluation Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a teaching and learning strategy to 	Development of a formal timeframe for working through the	Before start of term one 2012-13	Academic Quality Assurance	Schedule agreed with faculty early on in the new	Faculty Meeting	Comparison of the new Learning and Teaching

support various modes of study, and undertake more formal monitoring of teaching quality (paragraph 2.7 and 2.8)	Learning and Teaching Assessment Strategy at Faculty Meetings during 2012-13	(21 September 2012)	Officer	academic year		Assessment Strategy with its predecessor during the summer of 2013 to check that the new version more accurately describes the College's processes and plans (Academic Vice Principal)
	Discussion of sections of the Learning and Teaching Strategy at Faculty Meetings during the academic year 2012-13, leading to a revision of each section by the Academic Vice Principal	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer and Academic Vice Principal	Revised version of the Learning and Teaching Assessment Strategy approved by the Academic Board at its final meeting of the academic year 2012-13	Faculty Meeting and Academic Board	Identification of areas for further work (Academic Vice Principal)
	Creation of (a) a tutor twins list for 2012-13; (b) instructions/forms for a more clearly defined, termly, tutor twin observation system; and (c) a process for reporting on completed class observations	Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 September 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer and Academic Vice Principal	Approval of a new process for tutor twin observations by the faculty early on in term one (2012-13)	Faculty Meeting and then Courses Evaluation Committee	Monitoring to ensure that termly observations are taking place as scheduled (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)
	Agreement of a schedule for the Academic Vice Principal to sit in on	Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 September)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer and	Approval by the faculty early on in term one 2012-13 of a process for	Faculty Meeting and then Courses Evaluation	Confirmation at the final Courses Evaluation Committee of the year that all observations

	at least one and preferably two classes per year for each faculty member	2012)	Academic Vice Principal	class observation by the Academic Vice Principal	Committee	have been completed as planned (Academic Quality Assurance Officer)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take a more systematic approach to staff development and the mentoring of new staff (paragraph 2.14) 	Finalise revision of the faculty appraisal process, in consultation with faculty and the Human Resources Manager for the Kingham Hill Trust	Before start of term three 2012-13 (8 April 2013]	Principal and Academic Vice Principal	Agreement by the Leadership Team of a new appraisal form and process before the start of term three of the academic year	Leadership Team	Review of the Faculty appraisals carried out in 2012-13 to ensure that they do set clear goals, provide for evaluation of progress against those goals, and incorporate learnings from the new teaching observation system (Principal with Academic Vice Principal)
	Agreement of a mechanism through which learnings from observations by tutor twins and the Academic Vice Principal can be fed into the appraisal process	Before start of term three 2012-13 (8 April 2013)	Academic Vice Principal	Agreement by the Leadership Team of a mechanism for including feedback from teaching observations	Leadership Team	
	Re-introduction of slot at weekly Faculty Meetings for the sharing of best practice in teaching	Before start of term one 2012-13 (21 September 2012)	Academic Quality Assurance Officer	In principle schedule agreed with faculty early on in the new academic year	Faculty Meeting	Review of Faculty Meetings at the end of the year to ensure that best practice was shared during at least half of them (Academic Quality

	Publication of a revised and updated Faculty Handbook	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Development Projects Vice Principal, Academic Vice Principal and Academic Quality Assurance Officer	Revised Faculty Handbook discussed with faculty; approved by the Leadership Team before the end of the academic year 2012-13, and printed during summer 2013	Faculty Meeting and then Leadership Team	Assurance Officer) Review of the new Handbook by faculty during the course of the academic year 2013-14 to ensure that it provides the practical information and help that they need faculty, led by Academic Vice Principal)
	Creation of a more formal induction procedure for new teaching staff	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Academic Vice Principal	Agreement by the Leadership Team of a new process for the induction of new teaching staff Publication of formal guidelines as part of the new Faculty Handbook	Leadership Team	Review of the new induction process in the light of the next staff appointment after the publication of the guidelines (Academic Vice Principal)
	Agreement of a mechanism for more intentional use of the conference budget, including a reporting mechanism to	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Academic Vice Principal with Operational Vice Principal Academic	Agreement by the Leadership Team of a new process for the evaluation/approval of applications to	Leadership Team	Review of the new system during the academic year 2013-14 to see whether it has

	ensure that learning is shared with others		Vice Principal	the conference budget and for sharing learning with other staff		improved use of funds and resulted in the sharing of learning across staff members (academic vice principal)
	Exploration of the relative merits of Higher Education Academy membership versus a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education qualification for all teaching staff	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Academic Vice Principal	Formal proposal to the Leadership Team about the best way forward by the end of 2012-13	Leadership Team	<p>Involvement of at least one member of faculty on the chosen activity by the beginning of 2012-14 (Academic Vice Principal)</p> <p>Involvement of at least one further member of faculty each subsequent year (Academic Vice Principal)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise the policy on the management of the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.17) 	Development of the minimum standards previously discussed with faculty into a formal policy for management of the virtual learning environment and its content	Mid-term break of term one (26 October 2012)	Academic Vice Principal with virtual learning environment Project Manager	Agreement by the faculty and then by the Leadership Team of a formal policy for the management of the virtual learning environment and its content	Faculty and then Leadership Team	Review of virtual learning environment content by the virtual learning environment Project Manager at the end of term two, to check that agreed standards

				Publication of a formal policy by end of term one 2012-13 (12 Dec 2012)		are being applied (virtual learning environment Project Manager) Report by virtual learning environment Project Manager to the Leadership Team (virtual learning environment Project Manager)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify the processes for the management of public information and to provide a clear reporting structure (paragraph 3.8) 	<p>Agreement of a written procedure for the publication of all types of information produced by the College (for internal and external use)</p> <p>Agreement of formal reporting lines alongside the policy</p>	End of academic year 2012-13 (12 July 2013)	Development Manager, Academic Quality Assurance Officer and Principal	Approval by the Leadership Team of a formal policy and reporting structure before the end of the next academic year (2012-13)	Leadership Team	Review of the policy during the academic year 2013-14 to ensure that the procedure is being implemented as intended (Development Manager)

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

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

Academic Infrastructure Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

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

academic standards The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

awarding body A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

awarding organisation An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

enhancement Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

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:

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.

highly trusted sponsor An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

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

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

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

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

provider An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

threshold academic standard The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

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

RG 1040 09/12

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© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 702 3

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786