



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Point Blank Ltd

June 2017

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Point Blank Music School. The review took place from 6 to 8 June 2017 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Jo Coward
- Dr Mark Irwin.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

Key findings

Judgements

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**.

- The rigorous selection and induction of music industry professionals employed as sessional instructors, which ensures their readiness to teach higher education students (Expectation B3).

Recommendations

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

By January 2018:

- widen the range of academic staff expertise and experience to strengthen the School's approach to programme design and development (Expectation B1)
- review the School's strategy for learning and teaching to ensure a more systematic approach to the qualification and sustainable development of academic staff (Expectation B3)
- review the School's academic governance and committee structure, reporting lines and terms of reference, to ensure effective and systematic oversight of annual monitoring (Expectation B8)
- develop and implement a more systematic approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting enhancement (Enhancement).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

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

About the provider

Point Blank Ltd (the School) is a privately funded provider of higher education based in two buildings in Hoxton, East London. It is a company limited by shares with a Chief Executive Officer and a Managing Director acting as co-principals. The School also offers further education and non-accredited provision in London and overseas.

Since 2012, the School has been in a partnership with Middlesex University, when the School began delivery of an online Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education in Music Production and Business. In 2016, the University validated the School to deliver a BA (Hons) Music Production and Sound Engineering and a Certificate of Higher Education in Radio Broadcasting, both campus-based programmes.

The School aims to prepare students from diverse backgrounds for a successful career in the music industry, using a network of contacts from the profession. The mission includes aims to:

- Deliver highly engaging, practical, higher education... programmes that engage students whilst providing them with skills for life and a pathway into the creative industries.
- Continually strive to enhance the student experience through investment in the learning environment and physical resources including state-of-the-art studio and music production equipment.
- Maintain strong links with the creative industries through employment of academic staff currently active in, or with extensive experience of working in this profession.

There are 81 students enrolled, 26 across the online Certificate of Higher Education (CHE) and Diploma of Higher Education in Music Production and Business, 43 on the CHE Music Production and Sound Engineering, 11 on the BA Music Production and Sound Engineering and one on the CHE Radio Broadcasting. The School sees the UK's departure from the European Union as its key challenge as 20 per cent of its most recent intake were from the EU.

Students studying on higher education programmes produced a student submission. Student views were gathered through various forms of interaction including emails with student representatives, forums and Skype discussions.

The School underwent QAA's Review for Specific Course Designation (RSCD) in 2014 and received confidence judgements in how it manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes, and the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities, it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies, and a reliance judgement on the information that the School produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers. The review was followed by an annual monitoring visit in April 2016 which adjudged that the School had made acceptable progress in implementing the action plan from the April 2014 Review.

The School has sought to build on the good practice identified in the 2014 review by enhancing the virtual learning environment (VLE) and extending it to campus-based students. It has also enhanced the direct video review process by introducing two-way video conferencing to provide feedback to students. To address recommendations, the School has revised its academic committees, appointed a Head of Education and introduced an academic quality cycle. It has also developed a Teaching and Learning Strategy and a Student Charter, as well as undertaking a mapping of policies to the Quality Code for Higher Education.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1 Academic standards are set by the School's awarding body, Middlesex University (the University), in line with its guidelines for programme design as set out in its Learning, Quality and Enhancement Handbook which provides guidance on the requirements that programme design incorporates *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The University has approved the School's programmes since 2012 and in 2016 validated a BA (Hons) Music Production and Sound Engineering with two variants of standard three-year, face-to-face delivery and an accelerated option over two calendar years. A third, online version of the programme was approved by the University in April 2017. Students can be admitted at Cert HE and Dip HE stages and these also serve as exit awards.

1.2 The School's senior team follows the University's requirements in designing and developing programmes, using the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements to create the overarching structure. Members of the senior team meet as part of the New Programme Development Group to design new provision. The approach to maintenance of academic

standards in line with University requirements is also set out in the School's Quality Cycle and a mapping document demonstrating how this Cycle meets relevant sections of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

1.3 The policies and processes in place at the School would enable the Expectation to be met. The review team considered documentary evidence including details of the School's governance structure, validation reports, annual monitoring reports and minutes from relevant committees and boards. The team also met senior and academic staff as well as representatives from the University.

1.4 The School has the appropriate mechanisms in place to discharge its responsibilities in relation to maintaining the academic standards and requirements required by its awarding body. The University has confidence in the School's adherence to the University's policies and procedures. In relation to external frameworks including the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, relevant expertise and knowledge is largely confined to senior staff who ensure that policies and curriculum design make use of these reference points.

1.5 The review team confirmed that the School aligns with University practices and requirements in maintaining academic standards in accordance with external reference points. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

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

Findings

1.6 Responsibility for academic frameworks and regulations is held by the University. A Responsibilities Checklist sets out the specific responsibilities of the School and the University. The School's governance structure is designed to ensure that the University's requirements are met.

1.7 The School has recently revised its academic governance arrangements and these are set out in its Quality Cycle and detailed in the School's Quality Assurance Manual. The Executive Committee considers strategic and resource issues and may also discuss matters raised by the School's academic committees. The Annual Programme Review, at which staff and student representatives meet to review student performance data and the impact of School policies on the student experience, is being replaced by an annual meeting of a newly-established Academic Board. Its responsibilities include consideration of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), School academic policies, teaching and learning, the external examiner's report and assessment outcomes. The Quality Cycle also includes a Board of Study as a forum for feedback from student representatives, a Quality Standards Committee (QSC), which oversees actions arising from annual monitoring, the external examiner's report and the University's response to the report, and a Programme Development Committee which oversees amendments to provision, analyses student evaluation and notes areas of good practice. Each meets termly. The University Link Tutor provides commentary on the School's AMR.

1.8 The School adheres to Middlesex University's academic regulations as laid out in the Memorandum of Cooperation. The programme is delivered in accordance with the programme specification provided to students in the Programme Handbook, which also includes academic and assessment regulations.

1.9 The design of these governance frameworks and regulations would allow the Expectation to be met. To confirm this, the review team scrutinised policies and procedures, committee terms of reference, membership and minutes, and annual reports, and met School managers and staff.

1.10 While the new Quality Cycle is in its first year of operation, the review team concludes that the School has processes which enable the maintenance of academic standards in line with the University's frameworks and regulations. Issues relating to standards, which may arise from annual monitoring, external examiner reports or the University Link Tutor, are captured in the AMR and responded to by the Board of Study, the Programme Development Committee and the Executive Committee. The review team heard that the newly-established Academic Board will take on the responsibility for the monitoring of standards, for example via external examiner reports and student achievement data, over the next academic year. They also learnt that the Quality Standing Committee has a role in ensuring the appropriate actions are taken and analysing trends although it does not report directly to Academic Board. The team accordingly concludes that there is scope to clarify the respective roles, and relationship between, Academic Board and QSC. This is developed further in Expectation B8.

1.11 The review team established that the School has a framework and regulations in place that support the maintenance of academic standards as specified by the University. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.12 The University, as the awarding body, requires the School to provide a programme specification as the definitive record of programme requirements. This must include information on programme content, design and delivery and on module content and assessment. Approval is managed through the approval process outlined in the University's Learning, Quality and Enhancement Handbook. The programme specification and each accompanying module specification is provided to students in the programme handbook, which is located on the School's VLE. The Handbook is updated annually and approved by the University. The School is responsible for making the definitive records available to students and ensuring that they include accurate information on programme delivery and assessment, as well as School and University policies.

1.13 Any programme amendments are approved through the University's policies for programme validation, review and modifications as set out in the Learning Quality and Enhancement Handbook.

1.14 The review team scrutinised documentation including programme specifications, programme handbooks, and approval documentation, and met staff and students.

1.15 The School has effective processes in place to ensure that the definitive programme specification guides programme delivery. The specification includes information about module specifications, intended learning outcomes, credits and information about assessment and this is available to students in the programme handbook posted on the VLE. The School is effectively aligned with the University academic framework and regulations in relation to programme approval and amendment.

1.16 The review team concludes that the School is meeting University requirements in its delivery of approved programmes. Therefore Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.17 The School follows the University's process for programme approval, producing a programme rationale form for first stage approval followed by comprehensive mapping of learning outcomes referenced against sector benchmarks. The School's approach is aligned with the University's approval policy and process. The School operates a process for the approval of taught programmes that would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.18 The review team met: managers responsible for the maintenance of standards, quality and the development of programmes; programme and module leaders; teaching staff; and a small group of student representatives from two programmes at the School, including both on-site and online delivery. The team also examined policy documents, templates and handbooks.

1.19 Programme design at the School is led by the Education Manager working with the Content Development Manager. They take account of the FHEQ and relevant Subject Benchmarks Statements, as well as advice from industry experts. At module-level there is a focus on intended learning outcomes mapped to programme level outcomes.

1.20 Support in the programme design process is also offered by the University, which provides informal feedback to the School prior to the formal validation process. Assessment and moderation practices are consistent with School and University regulations and aligned with sector standards.

1.21 The review team concludes that the School, with the support of the University bodies, operates programme approval procedures which ensure that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold standards and are in accordance with relevant academic frameworks and regulations. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.22 In line with the University's approach, the School makes use of an outcomes-based approach to secure academic standards by mapping programme outcomes against UK threshold standards. Examination boards and external examiner reports provide means by which standards can be monitored. These processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.23 The review team examined documentation including approval reports, committee minutes and programme handbooks and met managers responsible for the maintenance of standards, quality and the development of programmes; with programme and module leaders; teaching staff; and with a small group of student representatives from two programmes.

1.24 Programme handbooks and module documentation clearly map the achievement of intended learning outcomes and academic credit through assessment. Validation documentation supplied to the University maps intended learning outcomes against the FHEQ and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. Minutes from exam boards and external examiner reports indicate that assessment policy and regulations are properly applied. Staff at the School have a broad understanding of the outcomes-based approach required by the University's procedure for programme approval.

1.25 The review team concludes that the School effectively ensures that credit and qualifications are awarded for the achievement of outcomes which meet threshold standards. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.26 The School follows the University's process and template for annual monitoring of its programmes with respect to academic standards. This arrangement would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.27 The review team met managers, programme and module leaders, teaching staff and a small group of student representatives from two programmes, and also reviewed documents relating to monitoring and review.

1.28 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is written by the Head of Education, with data provided by the Programmes Manager. The AMR considers statistical data on applications, recruitment, progression, retention and achievement, student demographics, first destinations and academic misconduct. It also incorporates a qualitative, evaluative commentary and an action plan that addresses the maintenance of academic standards.

1.29 Academic Board underpins maintenance of academic standards and annual monitoring to the University, drawing on reports from Boards of Study, the Programme Development Committee and the Admissions Committee. Student feedback from surveys and Boards of Study is monitored by the Quality Standing Committee, which is also tasked with ensuring students are aware of the School's responses to their feedback. The University reviews the School's AMR at its Annual Monitoring and Enhancement meeting and provides an action plan for the School to address.

1.30 The review team concludes that the School meets the requirements of the University by operating effective monitoring processes that demonstrate whether UK threshold standards are achieved and the academic standards of the awarding body are maintained. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.31 The School in addressing University requirements, seeks to make use of independent industry and academic expertise in the setting and maintaining of academic standards. Professional advisers are consulted by the School during module design and external experts are employed by the University at the approval stage. A suitable external examiner is appointed by the University to oversee the School's programmes and modules. The use of external and independent expertise to set and assure standards would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.32 The review team met School managers, programme and module leaders, teaching staff, and with a small group of student representatives. The team also examined documentation including reports from validation and external examiner reports.

1.33 The team was able to confirm that the School follows University requirements in using external advisers and experts, as well as external examiners, in programme design and monitoring to maintain threshold academic standards. Staff were able to clearly articulate and evidence how the School draws on external expertise in key processes.

1.34 The review team concludes that external expertise is effectively used in the design and approval of programmes and the maintenance of academic standards. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.35 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.36 The School effectively uses the processes of its awarding body, Middlesex University, in ensuring that academic standards are maintained in line with the relevant level of the FHEQ and external reference points. The School's own internal processes, including programme design and monitoring procedures, also make a contribution to the maintenance of standards. There are appropriate opportunities for the use of external expertise within these processes.

1.37 Of the seven Expectations in this judgement area, all are met with the associated level of risk for each identified as low. There are no examples of good practice, recommendations or affirmations associated with this judgement area.

1.38 As all Expectations in this area are met and the associated risks are low, the review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards on behalf of degree-awarding bodies at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

2.1 The School follows the University's policy and process for the design, development and approval of programmes, including the use of external expertise. This process assures that standards are set at the correct level and that the quality of partnership provision is maintained, and opportunities for enhancement are identified. The process for devising, developing and enhancing programmes is fit for purpose and would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.2 The review team met senior managers, programme and module leaders, teaching staff, and a small group of student representatives. The team also scrutinised documentation relating to programme design, development and approval.

2.3 The Programme Development Committee is charged with the ongoing development of academic provision at the School, while the Quality Standing Committee monitors feedback from students. Modifications to modules and programmes are monitored by the School and approved by the University through its policy and process.

2.4 In practice, programmes are developed by a small, capable team of management staff, drawing on the specific subject expertise of colleagues, the University and external advice as required. The School has recognised a need to strengthen the approach to programme design and to facilitate this it has formed the Programme Development Committee to allow more academic staff to contribute and develop experience of the School's approach. Furthermore, the School has recently established the New Programmes Working Group to oversee the development of new curriculum areas. However, the team noted that despite these changes, teaching staff were unfamiliar with key external reference points including the FHEQ, and were unclear as to how they might impact on programme design and students' learning. Accordingly, the team **recommends** that the School should widen the range of academic staff expertise and experience to strengthen the School's approach to programme design and development.

2.5 The review team concludes that the School has a systematic approach to the design and development of programmes but would benefit from broadening the range of staff able to contribute. Nevertheless, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.6 The Admissions Policy sets out the School's approach to higher education admissions. It is complemented by the Widening Participation Strategy which aims to diversify the student intake and, in particular, promote applications from the local community. The strategy makes use of social media, masterclasses and taster sessions, and means-tested scholarships to encourage applicants from local schools and under-represented social groups. Open days and student recruitment fairs are also used to provide information on programmes to prospective students.

2.7 Entry criteria are determined by the Executive Committee in consultation with the University. There is a holistic approach with the School considering formal qualifications and other factors in determining offers. Lower tariffs are considered for applicants from local schools that perform below the national average. Applicants may be asked to provide a portfolio and undertake an additional written test. All applicants who meet the entry criteria are interviewed. The final decision on offers lies with the Admission Manager. Applications are monitored by the admissions team who report on a weekly basis to the Managing Director. Professional services staff are trained in admission processes, the use of NARIC to assess entry qualifications, and the requirements of the UKVI's Tier 4 policy.

2.8 The Admissions Committee receives a report on the admissions cycle, which includes data on applications, student profiles and comparisons to previous cycles, from the Admissions Manager every three months. The Committee also considers an annual admissions report, which considers application and admission trends, and which then feeds into the School's Annual Monitoring Report.

2.9 The design of the processes for recruitment, selection and admission would allow the Expectation to be met. The review team tested the Expectation by examining the Admissions Policy, the Widening Participation Strategy, and minutes of meetings. The implementation of recruitment, selection and admissions procedures was evaluated in meetings with staff and students.

2.10 The Admissions Policy adheres to principles of fair admission and there are appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure that the Policy is regularly reviewed. The School is committed to recruiting students from disadvantaged groups. Regular reporting and analysis of applications supports the implementation of the Admission Policy and the Widening Participation Strategy. Staff working on admissions processes are well trained and knowledgeable.

2.11 The review team found that recruitment, selection and admissions processes are well established and working effectively. As such the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.12 The School's approach is defined in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (TLAS) which focuses on the delivery of blended learning, small group teaching and innovative assessment design. To support effective learning there are small student group sizes and six-hour teaching blocks. The bespoke VLE includes a digital version of each module which students can access on and off-campus. The TLAS has key performance indicators by which successful implementation can be measured. Learning resources are kept under regular review through the Board of Study, Programme Development Committee and the Executive Committee.

2.13 Academic staff, known as instructors at the School, are appointed based on their knowledge and experience in the music industry as well as, where applicable, previous teaching experience. Recruitment may be via industry contacts and networks. Academic staff on permanent contracts are required to have, or to be working towards achieving, a teaching qualification. Sessional instructors are expected to have a formal qualification one level above the highest level taught. Staff are expected to be appraised and observed teaching on an annual basis, and to have access to staff development.

2.14 The School's approach would allow the Expectation to be met. The review team tested this by the examination of policies on appointment and development of instructors, examples of teaching observation and appraisals, and student feedback. Meetings were held with students, teaching and senior staff to evaluate the operation of these policies.

2.15 All academic staff have annual appraisals and are subject to annual teaching observations by senior managers. However, the team noted that it is unclear as to how the School uses the outcomes of appraisal and observation in the context of TLAS aims. Staff are also evaluated via student feedback and module evaluation at the end of each module. Instructors have access to staff development opportunities which have included support for the development of innovative assessment (undertaken with the University) and a move to shared lesson plans and student exercises to promote a more consistent approach for students. There is a newsletter used to disseminate good practice.

2.16 Applicants for instructor posts are interviewed and then offered a small number of sessions where their teaching is observed. Training and mentoring is offered to all staff, and particularly those who are newly appointed. Once established, sessional instructors are offered longer contracts. Students are appreciative of the support of academic staff and particularly value the input of industry professionals employed as part-time instructors. The review team noted the School's rigorous selection and induction of music industry professionals employed as sessional instructors, which ensures their readiness to teach higher education students, and judged this to be **good practice**. Both staff and students value the VLE, further development of which, to enable it to run on any device including mobile phones, has commenced.

2.17 The review team noted that while instructors are encouraged to access staff development to improve the delivery of teaching and learning, they have fewer opportunities

to undertake curriculum design and development. Currently only senior School staff are fully cognisant of external benchmarks such as the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements. While instructors and other sessional staff have been provided with support in undertaking and designing assessment activity, the review team concludes that there are no explicit plans in place to develop and extend the knowledge of external frameworks which support the development of teaching and learning. This supports the **recommendation** in Section B1.

2.18 The team also noted that a significant number of academic staff instructors do not yet have a level of qualification above that being taught so that the School is not meeting its own policy for teaching staff. This is of particular significance in a context where the School has ambitions to develop provision at Level 7 of the FHEQ. In this context, and that of a limited core team, the review team **recommends** that the School should review its strategy for learning and teaching to ensure a more systematic approach to the qualification and sustainable development of its academic staff.

2.19 The Executive Committee approves the purchase of new equipment and resources to support curriculum delivery. The quality of learning resources is kept under review at Programme Development Committee and via the Annual Programme Review. Student representatives can comment on resources at the Board of Study.

2.20 The School has a strategic and mission-sensitive approach to learning and teaching which is valued by students and supportive of both full and part-time staff. However, there is a need to develop capacity and expertise. Accordingly, the Expectation is met but the level of associated risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.21 The School adopts a variety of formal and informal arrangements to support student development and achievement. At induction, all new students are required to undertake a Study Essentials programme delivered via the VLE. It contains sessions on how to use specialist software and equipment and on developing academic study skills. The School's commitment to small group teaching is designed to better support the learning of all students. Programmes are designed to embed employability skills such as minute taking, producing a business case and event planning. Students are also encouraged to use personal development planning as a means of identifying and recording skills and knowledge acquired throughout the programme.

2.22 School policies on student support, including those relating to personal tutors and student attendance, are posted on the VLE.

2.23 The School has arrangements in place for enabling student progression which would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.24 To test the Expectation the review team examined programme specifications and handbooks, VLE content and the minutes of relevant committee meetings. It also met senior staff, teaching and support staff, and students to assess the operation of arrangements for student development and achievement.

2.25 In addition to academic support provided by module tutors throughout the programme, students meet instructors in week 11 of each term to receive one-to-one support. They also receive personalised feedback on assessment and progress. Student attendance is monitored and there is a clear policy on student lateness which helps promote effective student learning and engagement.

2.26 Students are satisfied with the learning and teaching environment and appreciative of the help and support they receive from academic and support staff. They particularly value the currency of academic staff knowledge and experience of the music industry. The School has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring access to equipment and other resources needed to support student achievement.

2.27 The review team concludes that arrangements for the academic and personal support of students are effective. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.28 The School has a Quality Assurance Strategy that describes the processes in place to collect feedback from students, ensuring engagement with its students both individually and collectively. There is also a Student Charter that outlines the respective responsibilities of the School and its students. Student representatives sit on Boards of Study and Academic Board, and are supported in their role through training and written guidance. Student satisfaction is formally monitored and actions from Boards of Study are tracked by the Quality Standing Committee.

2.29 The range of opportunities for students to engage with the School would allow the Expectation to be met. The review team met senior managers, programme and module leaders, teaching staff and a small group of student representatives. The team also examined policies and procedures relating to student engagement including minutes from relevant committees and summary data from student surveys.

2.30 The School emphasises that student engagement is often informal, involving discourse between staff and students, both face to face and online. However, there are also more formal structures in place providing a range of opportunities for students to raise concerns and to share their views on the curriculum and its development, and the quality and enhancement of learning opportunities. For example, the School has introduced a 'You Said, We Did' approach to student feedback. Students and staff met by the team were able to give examples of how the student voice had informed the improvement of various issues including learning resources.

2.31 The review team found that the School is taking deliberate steps to engage its students in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. It therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.32 The School operates a process for assessment that is aligned to the University's regulatory framework. Assessment briefs are issued in Programme Handbooks and on the VLE in module guides. Modes of assessment are varied and include essays, presentations, reports and practice-based assessments. Assessment Boards are convened in accordance with University regulations, to oversee the maintenance of academic standards and make progression and award decisions. The School follows the University's policy for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).

2.33 The School's policy, regulations and processes for the assessment of students and RPL would allow the Expectation to be met. To test it in operation, the review team met School managers, programme and module leaders, instructors and a small group of students. The team also examined documentation including programme handbooks and module guides, feedback on assessment, moderation forms, external examiners reports and the minutes of Assessment Boards.

2.34 Individual assessments are set by the Head of Education and Content Development Manager who take advice from colleagues with particular subject expertise. All assessed work is processed electronically and students have access to plagiarism-detection software to check originality. There is a sample based moderation process at levels 4 and 5 and final projects at Level 6 are double marked. Marking is facilitated using the VLE and staff are provided with marking and moderation reporting templates. The University has provided specific training to School teaching staff on assessment.

2.35 Feedback on assessment makes it clear where students can improve their work. Indicative marks are released to students via the VLE one week after submission and work is then moderated before marks are confirmed, in line with the University's assessment regulations, at termly meetings of the first and second tier Assessment Boards. Students are then provided with an automatic opportunity to resubmit within a module following initial non-submission, and prior to a University Assessment Board.

2.36 The review team established that the School has valid and reliable processes of assessment that enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the qualification being sought. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.37 The University appoints a suitably qualified external examiner based on nominations from the School. The School's Head of Education acts as the primary contact with the external examiner, with the University providing a full programme of induction for all external examiners. The University receives external examiner reports and passes them on to the School, where they are considered by the Programme Development Committee and Academic Board, before being shared with students at Boards of Study meetings.

2.38 The procedures for external examining at the School would allow the Expectation to be met. The review team examined documents including University policy documents, annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports and responses to those reports. The team also met senior managers, programme and module leaders, academic staff and a small group of students.

2.39 The School uses the University's external examiner policy to guide the approach to appointment and induction and in specifying the responsibilities of the external examiner. Thereafter, the School's annual Quality Cycle maps processes for external examiner reports and responses. External examiners' reports are considered at the Programme Development Committee, Boards of Study, the minutes of which are shared with all students on the VLE, and by Academic Board, which approves an action plan to the Annual Monitoring Report. This draws on external examiner reports and other annual monitoring processes, including continuous audit by the Quality Standing Committee.

2.40 Both the Head of Education and the University Link Tutor respond formally to the external examiner report with the former working with Programme Leaders to implement actions and recommendations. Progress is audited by the Quality Standing Committee. It was evident to the review team that there is a clear understanding of the importance of external examiner processes and that staff routinely use external examiner feedback as part of the School's approach to quality assurance and enhancement.

2.41 The review team concludes that the School makes effective use of its external examiner. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.42 The School uses the University's policy and process for the annual monitoring of its provision. At local level, annual monitoring is overseen by the School's Academic Board at its annual meeting to review higher education provision and approve the School's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the University. The University Link Tutor assists the School in the preparation of the AMR. The report is then reviewed by the Deputy Dean and Link Tutor before consideration at an Undergraduate Annual Monitoring and Enhancement (AME) meeting, where feedback is provided to the School.

2.43 The policy and process for annual monitoring of the School's provision would allow the Expectation to be met. To test this, the review team scrutinised documentation including AMRs, and the minutes of Academic Board and the University AME, and met with School managers, programme and module leaders, instructors and a small group of students.

2.44 Annual Monitoring Reports for each programme are written by the Head of Education and submitted to the annual meeting of Academic Board for consideration and approval, before being submitted to the University for comment. Actions emerging from the Programme Development Committee, Boards of Study and the Admissions Committee also feed into the annual monitoring process, along with analysis of student feedback and student survey data from the Quality Standing Committee.

2.45 The review team noted some uncertainty as to the functions of different committees in operation and oversight of annual monitoring. Both Academic Board and Quality Standing Committee have roles in annual monitoring. However, the former meets only once a year so that no single committee maintains continuous oversight of academic quality. The 2014 Review for Specific Course Designation had recommended that the School should "define more clearly the respective terms of reference of the four academic committees jointly responsible for the management of academic quality" and also that it should "increase the frequency of ... committee meetings." The review team was of the view that the School had gone some way towards revising academic governance, but the infrequency of Academic Board meetings and the unclear relationship between the Board and Quality Standards Committee, meant the committee structure could be usefully revised. In particular, oversight of annual monitoring could be strengthened via more continuous oversight. The review team also noted that committees have no external membership. In this context, the review team **recommends** that the School review its academic governance and committee structure, reporting lines and terms of reference, to ensure effective and systematic oversight of annual monitoring.

2.46 The review team concludes that the School makes use of the annual monitoring process in assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. However, there is scope to revise the framework in which annual monitoring is undertaken to clarify the means of oversight. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met but the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.47 The School follows the University policy on academic appeals. Student complaints are dealt with directly under the School's own policy. The School provides additional guidance on the complaints and appeals process for students and staff in its own policy document and in Programme Handbooks.

2.48 The processes described in School and University documentation would allow the Expectation to be met. To test this, the review team scrutinised policy documents relating to appeals and complaints, and met managers, academic and professional staff, and a small group of students.

2.49 Academic appeals are dealt with by the School under the University's Policy up until a third stage when students may request a review of their appeal by the University. Student complaints are handled by the School at all stages. Students are given the option to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator in both cases. School procedure specifies that the Head of Education oversees academic appeals and the School Manager investigates them. However, since the School began delivering higher education programmes there have been no formal Academic Appeals or Student Complaints, with student concerns being informally resolved at an early stage.

2.50 The review team concludes that the School has procedures in place for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities that are fair, accessible and timely. While these have not been used, the team nevertheless concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.51 The School does not currently deliver learning opportunities with other organisations. Students do not undertake placements or work-based learning as integral components of their programme. The School does encourage students to gain experience in the music industry through using opportunities such as internships and volunteering. These are advertised to students via the VLE.

2.52 The review team tested the relevance of the Expectation by talking to staff and students and by considering programme documentation.

2.53 Teaching is undertaken on the School premises. External workplace experience is not a mandatory or credit-bearing part of any of the programmes at the School. The School encourages students to undertake work opportunities and helps to publicise paid and unpaid work experience opportunities through the VLE.

2.54 The review team confirms that this Expectation is not currently applicable to the School.

Expectation: Not applicable

Level of risk: Not applicable

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

2.55 The School does not offer research degrees.

Expectation: Not applicable
Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.56 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.57 There is one area of good practice, three recommendations and no affirmations in this section. The good practice relates to Expectation B3 and the rigorous selection and induction of music industry professionals employed as sessional instructors, which ensures their readiness to teach higher education students.

2.58 The review team has made one recommendation where the Expectation is met and judged to be a low risk. This relates to a need to widen the range of academic staff expertise and experience to strengthen the School's approach to programme design and development (Expectation B1). The team also made two recommendations where the Expectation is met but judged to be a moderate risk. These relate to: reviewing the School's strategy for learning and teaching to ensure a more systematic approach to the qualification and sustainable development of academic staff (Expectation B3); and reviewing the School's academic governance and committee structure, reporting lines and terms of reference, to ensure effective and systematic oversight of annual monitoring (Expectation B8).

2.59 Of the nine applicable Expectations in Part B, the review team judges that all are met. The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the provider **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 primary source of information for prospective students is the School's website. The website contains a dedicated information page for each programme which is supplemented by details on quality and governance arrangements. The School also makes extensive use of social media to publicise its provision and to engage potential students through the delivery of tutorials and masterclasses delivered on the School's YouTube channel.

3.2 Once enrolled, current students can access information via the VLE includes the Programme Handbook and links to School and University policies.

3.3 The Quality Assurance Manual details how the management of published information is governed. The School and the University share responsibility for the accuracy of published information, as spelt out in policy and procedures in the Memorandum of Cooperation and in the University's Learning, Quality and Enhancement Handbook. Details are also provided in the Responsibilities Checklist. The University's Academic Partnership Office approves the Programme Handbook on an annual basis and also approves use of the University's logo, and other marketing and publicity materials. The School's Managing Director is responsible for final approval of all published information before submission to the University. The School has recently engaged a legal team to review its provision of information to ensure compliance with Competition and Markets Authority guidance.

3.4 There are processes in place that would enable the Expectation to be met. To test the Expectation the review team examined the relevant agreements with the School's awarding body, the programme handbook, VLE content and other related documentation. Meetings with senior staff, teaching and support staff and students gave the team the opportunity to assess the operation of arrangements for the management of published information.

3.5 The School has a well-established process for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of its published information. It adheres to the requirements placed on it by its awarding body. Information is readily accessible for both current and prospective students via the website, social media and the VLE. The policy for sign off and approval for information is well understood and embedded within the organisational structure. Senior management within the School has taken measures to ensure that the provision of information is compliant with expectations of the Competition and Markets Authority.

3.6 Students who met the team reported that the information they had received on application and at induction was accurate and helpful. They noted that the Programme Handbook contains key information and they are routinely informed of any changes. Students make extensive use of the VLE and other electronic learning resources, and were appreciative of recent improvements which have improved access and navigation. Students receive timely information on their academic performance via the VLE. Full transcripts and certificates are provided by the University.

3.7 The review team concludes that the School has effective procedures in place to ensure that the information for which it is responsible is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

3.8 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.9 The Expectation in this section is met and the associated risk level is low. There are no areas of good practice, recommendations or affirmations recorded in this judgement area.

3.10 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at CEDU meets UK expectations.

3.11 Given that the applicable Expectation is met with a low level of risk, the review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

4.1 The School states that the key strategic document guiding enhancement is the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (TLAS) which specifies broad objectives and key performance indicators. The Quality Cycle enables the enhancement of student learning opportunities to be considered formally at the Board of Studies, Programme Development Committee and Quality Standing Committee. Overall strategic responsibility resides with Academic Board.

4.2 The School has a strategy for the enhancement of its provision that would allow the expectation to be met. To test this, the team scrutinised documents including the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and minutes and reports from the School's academic committees. It also met senior managers, programme and module leaders, instructors and a small group of students.

4.3 In discussion with the review team, both managers and staff could give examples of improvements to the quality of learning opportunities, including further improvement of the VLE and collaborative work on developing the curriculum. It was also apparent that the new Quality Cycle allows the use of quality assurance procedures to identify opportunities for enhancement. However, it was evident that there was no single shared definition of enhancement across the School. Moreover, instructors were unaware of the role of the TLAS as a framework for enhancement. Nor was it evident to the review team that committees regularly and routinely discuss enhancement. In this context, the review team concludes that current arrangements for identifying, recording and responding to the enhancement of learning opportunities could be strengthened. The team therefore **recommends** that the School develop and implement a more systematic approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting enhancement.

4.4 The review team concludes that the School has a strategic approach to the enhancement of students' learning opportunities. However, there is scope to strengthen this. In that context, the Expectation is met but the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.6 The review team noted the School's strategies and structures which provide an underlying framework for enhancement. However, the need for a more explicit and understood method gives rise to a recommendation for the School to develop and implement a more systematic approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting enhancement.

4.7 In this context, the review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

Glossary

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

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

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

Academic standards

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

Award

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

Awarding organisation

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

Blended learning

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

Credit(s)

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

Degree-awarding body

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

Distance learning

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

Dual award or double award

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

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

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

Expectations

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

Flexible and distributed learning

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

Framework

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

Framework for higher education qualifications

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

Good practice

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

Learning opportunities

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

Learning outcomes

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

Multiple awards

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

Operational definition

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

Programme (of study)

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

Programme specifications

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

Quality Code

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

Reference points

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

Self-evaluation document

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

Subject Benchmark Statement

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

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

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

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

Widening participation

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

QAA1951 - R8337 - Aug 17

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk