QAA

Queensbury College Ltd

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

September 2013

Key findings about Queensbury College Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in September 2013, 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 programmes it offers on behalf of ATHE and BCS, The Chartered Institute of IT.

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 these awarding organisations.

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

Good practice

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

- the College has introduced expertly designed learning initiatives to support student progression and achievement, including a highly effective course of Business English (paragraphs 1.5 and 2.5).

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 College to:

- review its approach to annual programme monitoring and action planning (paragraphs 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6 and 3.7)
- ensure that policies and procedures for ensuring good academic conduct are applied fully and consistently (paragraph 1.7)
- develop staff awareness and the explicit use of relevant chapters of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, ensuring that both are formally monitored (paragraphs 1.4 and 2.2)
- introduce a more coherent and structured approach to student support (paragraph 2.8)
- review the arrangements for the approval and revision of published information about learning opportunities (paragraphs 3.2, and 3.4 to 3.6).

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

- give further consideration to the external membership of the Academic Committee (paragraph 1.5)
- bring together its approaches to the collection and use of student opinion so that they better inform quality assurance (paragraphs 2.4, 2.9 and 3.7)
- build on existing staff development arrangements to offer a programme of activities that address and disseminate matters of specific relevance to higher education (paragraph 2.10)
- adopt a more strategic approach to the management of the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.13)
- provide students with an overview of their studies in programme handbooks or their equivalent (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted at Queensbury College Ltd (the provider; the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of ATHE and BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. The review was carried out by Dr Julie Andreshak-Behrman, Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Miss Maxina Butler-Holmes (reviewers) and Mr David Lewis (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 a range of internal documentation, including policy, procedure and strategy statements, records of meetings, a range of information produced for students and staff, including handbooks, curriculum and teaching materials. The team looked at a sample of assessed student work and held meetings with staff and students. It considered external reports from verifiers and ATHE, as well as the 2012 Educational Oversight report published by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Documentation relating to the approval of the new Bachelor Degree of Limerick Institute of Technology was also made available.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- curriculum and assessment materials published by the awarding organisations.

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

Queensbury College Ltd is an independent college of higher education located within two modern office blocks near the centre of Barking in East London. Established in 2006 to provide short vocational courses, it now offers a range of academic programmes at levels 4 to 7 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The programmes are in business and management, healthcare management and information technology. In-house courses in the academic and business use of English are also offered to support higher education students. The College mission includes a commitment to function as a responsible and responsive student-centred institution dedicated to academic excellence. It also seeks to provide a supportive environment that encourages staff to continue their intellectual and professional growth. The provision is delivered through an academic faculty, which is organised as three academic departments: Business Management, Information Technology and English. The College year operates as four semesters. The College had a successful Educational Oversight review by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2012.

The College has 806 higher education students (headcount). The recruitment is predominantly from Asia, with about 65 per cent of the total from Pakistan, 11 per cent from Bangladesh and eight per cent from India. Some seven per cent are recruited from Africa, mainly Nigeria. Nearly 90 per cent of students are male. The College has 11 regular academic staff excluding the Principal. The total includes three heads of department, two of whom have additional college-wide management responsibilities. There are three staff providing administrative and office support.

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations and with student numbers in brackets:

ATHE

- Extended Diploma in Management level 4 (121)
- Extended Diploma in Management level 5 (183)
- Diploma in Management level 6 (199)
- Diploma in Strategic Management level 7 (126)
- Diploma in Healthcare Management level 6 (20)
- Diploma in Healthcare Management level 7 (128)

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT (BCS)

- Certificate in IT level 4 (16)
- Diploma in IT level 5 (13)
- Professional Graduate Diploma in IT level 6 (0)

Limerick Institute of Technology

This qualification is approved and is recruiting for a September 2013 start:

- BA in Accounting and Finance (0)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College states that its delegated responsibilities are similar for both of its awarding organisations. It has responsibility for all aspects of assessment, including the setting, marking and moderation of assignments, and providing feedback. The College is also responsible for quality monitoring and review, student admissions, guidance and support, staff development, resources, student appeals and the collection and use of student opinion. It has overall control over information about learning opportunities and is responsible for ensuring that the information is fit for purpose. There is shared responsibility for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching, guidance for student progression and the generation of specific module and programme information for students. The College has many of the same responsibilities in its new relationship with Limerick Institute of Technology, but without the setting and moderation of assessments.

Recent developments

The College has developed most of its higher education programmes within the past three years, while running down its previous further education provision. The awards in business management and healthcare management have all been introduced since 2012. The number of higher education students has grown to about 800 from a base of 65 in 2010-11. Some of this increase is attributed to transfers from private institutions in the Greater London area that have ceased to trade. Limerick Institute of Technology has approved a new BA Accounting and Finance degree, which will recruit from September 2013 and will be taught wholly within the College. The College is looking at ways to increase the recruitment of UK students in the future.

Students' contribution to the review

Students on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. The submission received was a written report produced by a small team of students. The College gave administrative and technical support to the students. The submission, in the form of a 'Student Experience Report', was provided

directly by a member of the student production team, independently of the College's self-evaluation. It is based on the outcomes of an online student survey, discussions with individual students and a meeting with new students during their induction. It offers a student perspective on teaching and learning, including staff support and resources, as well as recreational facilities and College administration. The team made use of the submission in preparing for the visit and as a reference point in discussions with students and staff. Students further contributed to the review in a meeting with reviewers during the visit, and through a representative's attendance at a QAA briefing event.

Detailed findings about Queensbury College Ltd

1　Academic standards

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

1.1　The College has a well-defined and uncomplicated structure for managing its delegated responsibilities for academic standards. The provision is overseen by the three academic departments, with the head of each reporting directly to the Principal. The process is guided by the College's 2013 Quality Assurance Policy, Business Plan and Developmental Objectives 2012, and approved quality assurance policies and procedures.

1.2　The reporting lines between the committees that deal with standards and quality are clear and effective. The most senior committee is the Principal's Executive, which meets every two weeks and includes all senior staff in its membership. It is responsible to the proprietor and reports executive recommendations back down to the Academic Committee. There is student representation on the Academic Committee, as well as an external member from one of the awarding organisations, although committee minutes suggest that this external role is not active. A Staff-Student Consultative Committee provides a formal channel for the consideration of student opinion. The Academic Committee and the Staff-Student Committee meet once per semester, and report to the Principal's Executive Committee. The minutes of committees allow the discussions and decisions relating to standards and quality to be tracked. For example, the deliberations about whether to change the awarding organisation for business programmes is well documented in the minutes of the Principal's Executive Committee.

1.3　The introduction of annual programme monitoring in 2012 is a valuable enhancement to quality assurance, but the process needs to be strengthened in some important areas. The monitoring reports produced to date confirm that the College has responded effectively to the recommendations of external verifiers. This is evident in the introduction of course team meetings to promote more consistency in assessment practices, and the closer linking of marking schemes to assessment criteria. The reports contain little formal evaluation of student data for modules or programmes overall. In some cases, action planning lacks structure in relation to the stated purpose, responsibilities and timescales, which raises questions about how actions will be formally monitored within the quality assurance cycle. It is **advisable** that the College reviews its approach to annual monitoring and action planning. The current reports lack a systematic analysis of student achievement, progression and retention.

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

1.4　The College makes effective, but indirect use of external reference points for managing academic standards by ensuring it fully meets the requirements of its awarding organisations. In this it uses all standard modules, including organisation-designed curricula and assessments, for its programmes. These are aligned to the relevant levels of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The awarding organisations, through the early reports of external verifiers and the 'health check' report from ATHE, indicate that the College is meeting their expectations. Senior staff recognise that the College must ensure that it has appropriate policies and procedures that are aligned to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

1.5　Additional externality comes from the student progression opportunities that the College has negotiated with a number of universities in the UK and overseas. The College

has also developed a comprehensive and very well considered 'Advantage Study Skills' option to provide academic bridging support for students who wish to apply for a top-up degree at Anglia Ruskin University. External links with businesses, professions and regulatory bodies are as yet under developed. It is **desirable** that the College gives further consideration to the external membership of the Academic Committee, so as to better reflect the professional and vocational expectations of its programmes.

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

1.6   The College has a range of policies and procedures relating to assessment, verification and academic conduct, all of which are designed to help assure standards. The arrangements comply with the requirements of the awarding organisations, although there is some variability in the implementation of the policies. The scrutiny of assessed student work provided evidence that the internal verification policy is being regularly applied, although with limited comment by verifiers to support decisions.

1.7   The College gives students clear information on the expectations of good academic conduct, including referencing and malpractice, but there is a need to implement the arrangements more rigorously. Brief guidance is provided in the Student Handbook and all assignments include a standard statement about plagiarism. The College has also produced a detailed Harvard referencing guide, enhanced by an explanatory video that students can access electronically. It does not make use of commercial plagiarism-detection software. The sample of student work included examples of poor referencing and a case of suspected plagiarism which had not been rigorously dealt with. It is **advisable** that the College ensures that policies and procedures for ensuring good academic conduct are applied fully and consistently across all of the provision.

1.8   Substantial issues, resulting from a decision to change the awarding organisation used for management programmes, excluding those in healthcare, have been resolved. The issues arose when the College sought to change the awarding organisation from ATHE to The Learning Machine Ltd, using a third party agency. The attempted change resulted in considerable disruption to the assessment process, including delays in the external verification and approval of student marks. The College has now returned all of the business programmes to ATHE. The team received assurance that ATHE has agreed to verify the assessments originally undertaken on behalf of The Learning Machine Ltd and that the issues have not resulted in any long-term disadvantage to the students concerned.

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

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The arrangements for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are the same as those described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3 for managing academic standards. Staff seminars and programme team meetings now offer additional important mechanisms through which staff can discuss and disseminate matters relating to programme delivery and higher education generally.

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

2.2   The College uses the requirements of the awarding organisations as its main reference points, but has yet to formally address the implications of the Quality Code. Senior staff are confident that existing practices align with the indicators contained within the Code, particularly Part B: 'Assuring and enhancing academic quality', but the College has yet to undertake any formal mapping to confirm this. In deferring responsibility to the awarding organisations, it is not clear that staff have yet fully recognised their own responsibilities in relation to the various chapters of the Quality Code that deal with assuring and enhancing academic quality. It is **advisable** that the College develops staff awareness and the explicit use of relevant chapters of the Quality Code, ensuring that both are formally monitored through its quality assurance mechanisms.

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

2.3   Teaching and learning operates within the context of a published strategy and the College uses a number of appropriate mechanisms for ensuring its quality. These mechanisms include the procedures for appointing staff, a scheme for observing teaching, staff appraisal and feedback from students at the completion of each module. The learning and teaching strategy reflects the College's mission, emphasising individual student learning within the context of a supportive learning environment. All prospective teaching staff are interviewed by the Principal and may be asked to demonstrate some aspect of their teaching skills. The observation of teaching was introduced in 2012 and uses a reporting form that allows for the constructive sharing of strengths and suggestions for improvement. Initially the Principal observed all staff, but there is now a shift towards a peer-based system. Similarly, annual staff appraisal has been introduced but it is still at an early stage of implementation.

2.4   Students are enthusiastic in endorsing the high quality of the teaching they receive. The scrutiny of assessed work indicates that written feedback is mostly extensive and helpful. The student module evaluation form is largely focused on teacher performance and there is evidence that student opinions are acted upon when concerns are identified. The forms are completed online and the results are scrutinised by the Principal. However, the staff acknowledge that the response rate for module evaluations is low. The large growth in student numbers presents the College with new challenges in its collection of student feedback. It is **desirable** that the College brings together its approaches to the collection and use of student opinion, so that they better inform quality assurance. Such harmonisation might also address the need to collate student feedback systematically across more areas of College activity.

2.5   The additional study needs of students, nearly all of whom are non-native speakers of English, are very well looked after in the delivery of the programmes. It is a feature of **good practice** that the College has introduced expertly designed learning initiatives to support student progression and achievement, including a highly effective course of Business English classes. These classes are well matched to the vocational focus of the programmes and are highly valued by the students.

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

2.6   Students feel very well supported, but overall the arrangements for student support are unduly dependent on informal and voluntary interaction between students and staff. The self-evaluation recognises the need for a more structured approach in areas such as careers advice and academic counselling. A head of department has oversight of student welfare matters and administrative staff are available to help with specific advice and support.

The College has no overarching student support policy and it is unclear how the effectiveness of support is formally monitored.

2.7   There are clear arrangements in place for admissions to individual programmes, although there is no College policy covering all of its provision. The structured induction is appreciated by students. The comprehensive Equal Opportunities and Disability Policy is a clear statement of commitment on behalf of the College, but it is not clear how students are able to access the policy.

2.8   The teaching staff are responsive to the needs of students and provide a range of academic and pastoral advice and support. Group academic tutorials are regularly provided as part of module teaching. In addition, the College has established a weekly open day for students to consult available staff on a one-to-one basis. The open days are timetabled on Wednesday, which is a non-teaching day for all programmes. In discussion with the team, students confirmed that they approach staff informally for a range of support, including careers and personal advice. There is some evidence of students being referred to external counselling services where the need has arisen. In recognition of the rapid growth in students, it is **advisable** that the College now introduces a more coherent and structured approach to all student support.

2.9   The College has a robust system of student representatives who meet formally with staff on the Student-Staff Consultative Committee and are also represented on the Academic Committee. The records of meetings indicate that the system is working well. There would now be benefit in creating a more integrated system for gathering and responding to student opinion, looking at student representation alongside other feedback mechanisms.

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

2.10   The College recognises the importance of staff development, as well as the need to enhance the existing formal provision. The College has a Faculty and Staff Development Policy and has recently introduced a modest staff development fund. It also has a system of annual staff appraisal. The main mechanism for college-led staff development is the new programme of staff seminars, which has been used to raise awareness and share experiences across a number of topics relating to teaching, support and programme delivery. New staff are provided with an induction and there is an expectation that all teaching staff will engage with current scholarship in their field. Several staff are approved assessors or verifiers for awarding organisations and some have undertaken training for Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. It is **desirable** that the College builds on existing staff development arrangements to offer a programme of activities that address and disseminate matters of specific relevance to higher education.

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

2.11   Overall, the resources are appropriate for enabling students to meet the requirements of their programmes, but there are increasing pressures on accommodation and the core of senior academic staff as a result of the recent expansion. The College does not maintain a discrete resources budget, but makes decisions on the basis of staff requests and evaluating needs at the start of each new session. The need to ensure that the requirements of the awarding organisations are met is the main driver in the allocation of resources.

2.12   The academic staff are well qualified and experienced, and are effectively supported by the administrative team. The teaching accommodation is well maintained and has suitable furniture and teaching equipment. The teaching block has free wireless internet access for students, as well as a common room. Students report that some of the extensive computing facilities would benefit from updating. The College has recently invested in additional library resources to support the new awards and increase in student numbers.

2.13   The virtual learning environment is an important initiative that is still at a relatively early stage of development. It is valued by students, but there is no formal College requirement for staff to populate the site with a minimum set of learning materials or information. As a consequence, the provision of learning materials is variable, limited and determined largely by the skills and enthusiasm of individual module teaching staff. It is **desirable** that the College adopts a more strategic approach to the management of the virtual learning environment.

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

3   Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1   The clear and easily navigated website is the primary channel for publishing information, providing access to a wide range of materials for students, staff and other stakeholders. It includes helpful information for potential students, a student resources section, brief programme descriptions, staff and student handbooks, some College policies, and the College's collaborative agreements with higher education institutions. The programme information on the website is limited to standard descriptors published by the awarding organisations. The College has not produced programme specifications, but curriculum details can be accessed on the awarding organisations' websites.

3.2   The student resources section of the website is publicly accessible and includes the International Student Handbook, which students confirm provides an attractive and valuable introduction to the College, its staff and facilities, as well as life in the local area. The Handbook includes some policy statements and indicates that fuller versions, including regulations, are accessible on the website, but this is not always the case. In the case of the policy on equal opportunities and disability, the College did not demonstrate how it could be accessed by students. Furthermore, the version of this policy provided for reviewers is different from the one contained in the staff handbook.

3.3   Students are provided with detailed module information, including assessment arrangements, but have no convenient means of seeing an overview of their whole programme. General information is provided at induction and students are given the module guides and specifications, as well as assignment tasks produced by the awarding organisations. It is **desirable** that students are provided with an overview of their studies in programme handbooks or their equivalent.

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

3.4   The arrangements for checking and approving information produced in the College's name have proved sufficient in the past, but are now in need of improvement. The College fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the awarding organisations and to the higher education institutions with which it has progression agreements. Although there is no evidence of a serious threat to the trustworthiness of published information, there are examples of out-of-date information carrying the College's name still being in circulation. For example, the College indicated that there was no current prospectus on the website, because it was still in production. However, an earlier version had not been removed, allowing access to some out-of-date information about programmes and awarding organisations. While the error was not deliberate and there was no significant threat of misleading visitors to the site, the College had not been aware of the situation. In addition, the trademarks of former awarding organisations and some outdated subject references remain on minor items of promotional material.

3.5   Academic staff are well informed, helped by a staff handbook that is reviewed regularly by the Principal. Some of the component sections and policies in the handbook are undated, making it more difficult to maintain version control.

3.6   The Principal takes direct responsibility for approving all published information, 'howsoever disseminated'. In the absence of a formal information policy it is not clear how responsibilities are devolved for the development and checking of materials prior to the final signing off. Similarly, there is a lack of security surrounding the mechanisms for monitoring the accuracy of current published information and removing that which is no longer correct. The growing scale and complexity of the College's provision, and associated information, means that there is now a need for a more systematic approach. It is **advisable** for the College to review its arrangements for the approval and revision of published information about learning opportunities. There is a need to ensure transparency and the recording of decisions at each stage of the process.

3.7   The various mechanisms for collecting student and other stakeholder opinion do not explicitly require feedback on the clarity or accuracy of published information. It is therefore unlikely to be formally addressed as part of annual programme monitoring.

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

Action plan[3]

Queensbury College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 2013						
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 College:						
• the College has introduced expertly designed learning initiatives to support student progression and achievement, including a highly effective course of Business English (paragraphs 1.5 and 2.5).	Head of English dept will make a presentation to all College staff (academic and support), with the aim of spreading best practice and increasing retention	31 January 2014	Head of English department in consultation with College Principal	Improved student retention based on greater English-language competence; this will be measured against retention as recorded in January 2013	Academic Committee	Via annual monitoring data as evaluated by the College Academic Committee
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• review its approach to annual programme monitoring and	Enhance the annual monitoring process, embodying more precise timelines, and	March 2014	Principal's Executive in consultation with Staff-	Annual monitoring reports must be precise, indicating action to be	Action by Principal's Executive and report to the	Minutes of these committees and feedback on new annual monitoring

[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 College's awarding organisations.

action planning (paragraphs 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6 and 3.7)	more discrete outcomes targeted on enhancement; such enhancement to be in place for annual monitoring 2014		Student Consultative Committee	taken, by whom, and (where appropriate) a timeline	College Academic Committee	from external stakeholders, including awarding bodies and external members of Academic Committee
• ensure that policies and procedures for ensuring good academic conduct are applied fully and consistently (paragraph 1.7)	Fully revise these policies and procedures, melding them into a separate online document available via the College website, linking to appropriate plagiarism advisory and detection services [for example www.plagiarismadvice.org]

Put this on the agenda of the Staff-Student Consultative Committee, Staff Development Committee, and College Executive, with a view to ensuring full and consistent [that is, coherent and uniform] application of relevant | Consistent application must be demonstrated and signed off by College Executive by June 2014 | Office of the Principal | Reduced incidence of academic dishonesty, as measured by the number of formal investigations and disciplinary sanctions invoked | College Academic Committee; external stakeholders | Feedback and external verification reports from awarding bodies |

	policies and procedures					
• develop staff awareness and the explicit use of relevant chapters of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education ensuring that both are formally monitored (paragraphs 1.4 and 2.2)	The Quality Code will form an ongoing standing item on the agenda of staff development seminars, with feedback and advice provided to QAA and QAA's Educational Oversight Forum as necessary Familiarity with the Quality Code will also be incorporated within relevant job descriptions, and its awareness and use will become part of the annual performance appraisal exercise	All actions to be completed by July 2014	Office of the Principal	Institution-wide familiarity with the Quality Code, and its incorporation within relevant College policies Familiarity with relevant sections of the Quality Code will be measured primarily via staff appraisal, and monitored by the College Academic Committee	College Academic Committee	Feedback and external verification reports from awarding organisations
• introduce a more coherent and structured approach to student support (paragraph 2.8)	Formal responsibility for student support will be located within the line management and job description of a dedicated staff member (who has already been identified), who, in consultation with	All actions to be completed by July 2014	Principal's Office	Quality-related evidence from student feedback and the Staff-Student Consultative Committee, supported by measurable outcomes	Principal's Executive	Annual Monitoring Outcomes (including references to student feedback), signed off by the College's Academic Committee

	students and the Principal, will develop a simple structure designed to monitor relevant deliverables			derived from student experience questionnaires		
• review the arrangements for the approval and revision of published information about learning opportunities (paragraphs 3.2, and 3.4 to 3.6).	Undertake a thorough review of relevant published information, and at the same time design and implement a document version tracking system that will, among other things, ensure that only the latest version of policies, procedures, and so on are available both on the College's website and in hard copy	All relevant actions to be completed by July 2014	Principal's Executive Committee	Zero complaints from internal or external stakeholders relating to the accuracy of published information	Office of the Principal	Annual monitoring report outcomes Reports by awarding organisations
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• give further consideration to the external membership of the Academic Committee (paragraph 1.5)	Invite an additional **external** colleague to join the Academic Committee, preferably not from a current awarding organisation, but with relevant industrial experience, able to	Appointment to be ratified no later than 31 March 2014	The Principal	Improved attendance by all external members of the Academic Committee Greater awareness by the Academic	Principal's Executive	Office of the Principal, reporting as necessary to the Proprietor External verification reports by awarding

	undertake to attend meetings regularly			Committee of the expectations of external members		organisations
• bring together its approaches to the collection and use of student opinion so that they better inform quality assurance (paragraphs 2.4, 2.9 and 3.7)	This will be put as a discrete agenda item on the agenda of all College committees, more especially to gather and, where appropriate, act upon student-derived views of the quality and value of various opinion-gathering approaches It is also proposed to make a donation to a charity or charities chosen by the student body in respect of each survey questionnaire completed, and to implement institution-wide questionnaires on issues wider than those related to specific academic courses It is also proposed (as explained at QAA REO Conference on 22 October 2013) to	All actions to be completed by March 2014	Office of the Principal	Much improved rates of response (no less than 33.3%), feeding into the annual monitoring cycle	Principal's Executive College Academic Committee	Minutes of the Executive, Academic Committee and Staff-Student Consultative Committee

	consult students more formally on the choice of awarding organisations					
• build on existing staff development arrangements to offer a programme of activities that address and disseminate matters of specific relevance to higher education (paragraph 2.10)	Agree, in consultation with all staff, an annual staff development programme that includes developments in the wider higher education community Report the results, as appropriate, to designated national bodies including committees of both Houses of Parliament and Ofqual.	The enhanced staff development programme will be fully implemented by 30 June 2014	Office of the Principal	Greater awareness of higher education developments among all College staff and greater public profile for Queensbury College	Principal's Executive College Academic Committee	Minutes of the Executive and Academic Committee
• adopt a more strategic approach to the management of the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.13)	The further development and refinement of this virtual learning environment will be the subject of a staff development seminar, with a view to drawing up a list of mandatory pedagogic requirements involving virtual learning environment deliverables	June 2014	Office of the Principal in consultation with Head of Academic Departments	All core course materials will be available to students on the virtual learning environment	The Principal and the Academic Committee	Minutes of the Academic Committee and of the Staff-Student Consultative Committee

	The key action here is the implementation of the agreed mandatory requirements					
• provide students with an overview of their studies in programme handbooks or their equivalent (paragraph 3.3).	The College will consult with its awarding organisations with a view to producing suitable versions of their own programme guides that can serve as College programme handbooks	Handbooks covering all programmes of study offered by the College to be published no later than 31 August 2014	Office of the Principal	Publication of College programme handbooks (covering all programmes of study) in digital format	College Academic Committee	Minutes of the College Academic Committee

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/educational-oversight.

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

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

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

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

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to
perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for
the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

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

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

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

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

highly trusted sponsor An organisation that the UK Government trusts to admit migrant
students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based

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

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 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.

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

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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

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

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

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