



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College

September 2016

Contents

About this review	1
Key findings.....	2
QAA's judgements about RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College.....	2
Recommendations	2
Financial sustainability, management and governance	2
About RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College.....	3
Explanation of the findings about RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College	6
1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation	7
2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities.....	21
3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities	44
4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities	47
Glossary.....	51

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 RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College. The review took place from 27 to 29 September 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Ann Hill
- Mr Stephen Harris
- Mr Daniel McCarthy Stott (student reviewer).

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

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

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of threshold 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.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 7.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.² A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms please 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/about-us.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College.

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

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College.

By April 2017:

- further develop the pastoral care for students (Expectation B4)
- ensure that equality and diversity principles are embedded within College policies for staff and students (Expectation B4)
- further develop the student representative system by providing formal training to enable students to more effectively fulfil their role (Expectation B5)
- ensure a consistent approach to the development and implementation of action plans that have clear measurable targets and outcomes within an explicit timeframe to enable progress to be systematically measured in respect of student learning opportunities (Expectations B8, B2, B3, B4 and Enhancement).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College has satisfactorily completed the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

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

About RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College

Regent College Higher Education is one of the trading names of RTC Education Ltd. The College was originally established as an independent school and sixth-form college in 2000 as the founding business within the Regent Group. Currently, as owner operators, Regent Group also manages a nursery, after-school tuition centres, sixth-form colleges and a leadership academy. Since the Group was founded in 2000 it has been wholly owner operated and teaches from premises in Wembley, west London.

Regent College started its higher education provision, known as Regent College Higher Education, in September 2010 with the Pearson Higher National Diploma in Business being first offered in the 2010-11 academic year. Following this, from January 2011 the College offered the London Centre of Marketing (LCM) and Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management (OTHM) programmes. Due to changes in the market, the College decided to close the LCM and OTHM courses to concentrate its efforts on the Pearson HND Business programme and the UK/EU market. Regent College Higher Education has maintained its Tier 4 status, retaining its Tier 4 licence.

In July 2012, Regent College Higher Education gained Specific Course Designation from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills for its Pearson HND Business programme. This has resulted in the College concentrating on the UK/EU student market rather than recruiting students from overseas. Initially, the HND Business programme attracted a small number of overseas students. With UK/EU students being able to access student loans, combined with a highly successful marketing and recruitment initiative, student numbers have grown significantly and now make up the entire HND student population.

At the time of the review, Regent College Higher Education has 1,029 students studying on the HND Business programme, either as a general qualification or from one of five specialist pathways. The pathways currently on offer are:

- Business (Human Resources)
- Business (Marketing)
- Business (Law)
- Business (Accounting)
- Business (Management).

From September 2016 (Pearson Business Programme Specification (Issue 1)) is being introduced which includes a general HND Business programme and the following six pathways:

- Business (Accounting and Finance)
- Business (Business Management)
- Business (Human Resource Management)
- Business (Marketing)
- Business (Operations Management)
- Business (Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship).

The College also offers an Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership which had one cohort running from March 2015 to March 2016. There are currently no applicants for further cohorts of this programme.

The College is in early talks with universities to find a collaborative arrangement that would allow it to deliver a foundation programme (which would allow students to progress to level 6 in the FHEQ), in order to re-establish academic levels of engagement with students and

FHEQ level 6 provision allowing students to use the full potential of the credits awarded within the Pearson Higher National Diploma. This would allow progression to a one-year full-time top-up undergraduate honours degree.

The College's Strategic Plan for Higher Education was first developed in October 2014 and updated in 2016. It provides a working document for the implementation of the Vision, Mission and associated set of Values, incorporating the group-wide perspective which informs the development of the higher education division as follows.

Vision

'To be a top provider of private higher education in London through being renowned for high academic standards, provision of a high quality learning experience and the life-changing opportunities we provide for our students.'

Mission

'To provide academic and professional education for UK, EU and overseas students based on secure academic standards, high quality learning opportunities and meeting employer needs within a transformative private education sector in the United Kingdom.'

Values

- 'Providing a student experience of the highest quality and with quality enhancement embedded in all we do.
- Valuing opportunity, diversity and inclusiveness.
- Enabling a culture of professionalism openness, empowerment, responsibility and excellence.
- Rewarding success and learning to do better.
- Proactive and innovative in responding to challenges in a rapidly changing world.
- Performance through valuing staff and continuous staff development
- Sustainability, value for money and adding value in all we do.'

The College's continuing commitment to widening participation and admitting some students who have had a significant break from full-time education mean that the main challenge facing Regent College Higher Education is student retention, achievement and completion. Other challenges facing Regent College Higher Education include:

- the support of students who successfully achieve the HND Business qualification to either progress to university to continue their studies at undergraduate honours degree level or to appropriate employment
- preparation for the new Pearson HN Business programme specification, to be taught from September 2016 onwards
- continue to meet external student data reporting requirements to HESA, HEFCE, DfE, and so on
- preparation to engage in the 2016-17 academic year with the National Student Survey (NSS) and the destinations of leavers from higher education (DLHE) surveys (the latter is in progress)
- ensuring the College makes full use of the Unit-E student record system and other software initiatives such as the introduction of LMS+, which, when implemented, will enhance further support for students and provide a more interactive platform for students to address tutors concerning assessment matters, assignment preparation and assessment feedback queries
- result of the UK European Union referendum and consequences following Brexit.

The College was subject to QAA Reviews for Educational Oversight in May 2012 and June 2013 which concluded that, while confidence could be placed in how the College manages its stated responsibilities for the standards that it offers on behalf of its awarding organisation and on the information that the College produces for its intended audiences, limited confidence could be placed on how the College manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers. For 2012, six advisable recommendations and two desirable recommendations were identified. For 2013, nine advisable recommendations and one desirable recommendation were identified.

The College was subject to a further QAA Review for Educational Oversight in January 2014 which concluded that confidence could be placed in each of its stated responsibilities in the quality of standards, learning opportunities and information. One area of good practice, seven advisable recommendations and five desirable recommendations were identified. In February 2015, the QAA annual monitoring report recorded that the College had made acceptable progress against its action plan and, in February 2016, the annual monitoring report recorded that the College had made some progress but further improvement was required in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the previous monitoring visit.

The review team considered the progress made by the College in developing the good practice and implementing the recommendations and concludes that that they have all been satisfactorily addressed.

Explanation of the findings about RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation

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 Regent College Higher Education is approved by its awarding organisation, Pearson, to deliver the BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business and the Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership. Pearson BTEC is an Ofqual regulated organisation and is on the Register of Regulated Qualifications at Ofqual. As an approved Pearson Centre, the College is responsible for contributing to the maintenance of academic standards set by Pearson. Until September 2016, the College delivered the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Business programme specification Issue 4, 2010. From September 2016 onwards the new Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Business, Issue 1, will be delivered by the College. The College currently delivers only the HND in Business with no current intake to the Extended Diploma.

1.2 The College uses processes designed by Pearson for monitoring quality but the awarding organisation is responsible for all aspects of programme design, including alignment with national credit frameworks. All programmes are aligned by Pearson to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the FHEQ, with reference to the relevant Subject and Qualification Benchmark Statements.

1.3 The new HND Business specification is registered with the Ofqual Regulations Qualification Framework and the HND Business has been mapped against level 5 of the

FHEQ. The 2010 HND specification was registered with the QCF, also at level 5 within the FHEQ. It is the responsibility of Pearson, as the awarding organisation, to ensure that the HND Business programme is positioned, aligned and named appropriately according to these frameworks, and that the learning outcomes are appropriate to level 5 in the FHEQ. In consequence, the BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business is designed by Pearson to meet FHEQ level 5 national higher education standards.

1.4 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation A1 to be met in principle.

1.5 The review team scrutinised documentary evidence and discussed details with senior management and teaching staff and with Pearson's representative, and confirmed the College's understanding of their responsibilities for the maintenance of academic standards on behalf of the awarding organisation.

1.6 College staff are aware of the requirements of the approval process and of the relevant academic frameworks and guidance, and external reference points. Staff articulated an understanding of their responsibilities for maintaining academic standards, as agreed with the awarding organisation and the relevance and accuracy of documentation relating to programme specifications and unit guides. Staff have received training in how to use the Quality Code and staff verified that the College mapping exercise has been beneficial as a means of ensuring that the College is establishing correct standards across its provision.

1.7 Programme specifications and handbooks demonstrate adherence to the FHEQ and other reference points for academic standards with Pearson retaining ultimate responsibility for setting standards. Full programme specifications are available to staff and students for each programme of study. Unit guides provide learning outcomes, methods of assessment and the assessment criteria. Regular and effective Course Management meetings are held to discuss the delivery of individual programmes of study and Unit Leader meetings are held to consider individual student progress.

1.8 As required by Pearson, the College produces its own HND Business programme specification both for the 2010 BTEC specification and for the new 2016 programme specification which is approved by the Academic Board. The College selects which option units to offer from the Pearson BTEC programme specification. College decisions concerning option units reflect staff expertise and these are approved by the Director of Studies following consultation with senior staff, including the Academic Principal and Vice-Principal, at Course Management meetings, subject to final approval by the Academic Board.

1.9 The review team concludes that Expectation A1 is met. The level of associated risk is low because the College meets the requirements of its awarding organisation in all aspects of regulations and procedures.

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

1.10 The academic governance of the College is overseen by the Academic Board, which includes senior management, academic staff and three student representatives including the Student President. The function of the Academic Board is to safeguard and assure the academic integrity and quality of higher education programmes at the College. The Academic Board is responsible for the development and maintenance of academic standards, enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience, and relations with external bodies. The Board advises the CEO/Executive Principal and the Academic Principal, meets a minimum of three times a year and can convene for extraordinary meetings when necessary. Minutes of meetings are circulated to all members and are also made available to the wider staff and student community through the virtual learning environment (VLE).

1.11 The Academic Board has three subcommittees. The Course Board is chaired by the Academic Principal and is concerned with the more operational aspects of College programmes. The Course Board considers matters to do with teaching, learning, term plans and timetables, changes to curriculum, challenges within the curriculum, academic decisions, standardisation, study skills, pastoral and personal tutorial support, delivery planning and enhancement, performance measurement, staff observations, student feedback, results of student surveys, internal verification and the overall assessment strategy. It also discusses matters with regards to enrolment, attendance, withdrawals, progression and achievement. It reviews any recommendations and actions arising from the Pearson Standards Verifier's report. Membership includes two student representatives and the Student President. The Course Board reports to the Academic Board. Minutes of both committees are disseminated to all constituent members and made available through the VLE.

1.12 The Assessment Board acts as an examination board and considers grades and achievement in relation to assessed work, subject to final approval by Pearson, and makes decisions concerning student progression, academic malpractice and referral and resubmission of coursework. The Assessment Board meets on a regular basis. The awarding organisation appoints a Standards Verifier to verify assessment results and completes an annual management review to confirm that the College is adhering to the relevant quality assurance processes. The College produces assignment briefs for Pearson programmes and these, in addition to College assessments, are reviewed by the Standards Verifier prior to releasing results. The College uses Pearson-set assignments, such as that for Unit 6: Managing a Successful Business Project which sets out a theme and provides links to useful research sources. The College produces the relevant assignment brief.

1.13 The Student Representative Committee meets once each term and all elected student representatives are invited to attend. Student representatives elect the Student President. Up to four members of staff, including the Academic Principal are invited to meetings. The agenda is student-led and the meeting is chaired by the Student President unless a staff member is requested to chair it (see Expectation B5).

1.14 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met in principle.

1.15 The review team explored the College's implementation of frameworks and regulations through discussions with staff and students and a review of documentation, including the terms of reference and minutes of Academic Board and other committees.

1.16 The governance structure and committee meeting cycle is effective, with due process accorded to matters requiring approval by the Academic Board. The post of Director of Quality Enhancement is currently vacant and a reappraisal of quality assurance arrangements at the College is underway. The College has recently established a Quality Committee and anticipates that the Committee will encourage a wider engagement with quality assurance within the College. It will report to the Academic Board and its terms of reference and composition are currently being developed. The College expects that the Quality Committee will play a key role in quality enhancement and that the Academic Principal will continue to carry executive responsibility for quality assurance.

1.17 The governance structures are clearly stated and are implemented with effective monitoring. The awarding organisation holds ultimate responsibility for academic standards, with the College discharging its responsibility for the oversight and maintenance of academic standards effectively with regard to delivery of the programmes.

1.18 The College has a suitable and effective staff structure with a clear separation of academic and administrative functions. Academic staff under the leadership of the Director of Studies comprise Cohort Leaders, Unit Leaders and Lecturers.

1.19 The review team concludes that Expectation A2.1 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College's governance arrangements are effective and in accordance with the academic frameworks and regulations of its awarding organisation.

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

1.20 The awarding organisation, Pearson, maintains the definitive record of the College's programme and qualifications and it retains responsibility for approving any changes. The College, in line with requirements of the awarding organisation, produces its own programme specifications and programme handbooks.

1.21 There are currently two programme specifications in operation for the College's HND Business programmes. All students who enrolled at the College prior to September 2016 are being taught under the 2010 specification and all those who have enrolled since September 2016 are being taught under the new specification. The new 2016 Programme Specification has been designed by the College in accordance with Pearson guidelines and was approved by the College's Academic Board in August 2016.

1.22 Students are able to access information relating to their programme of study on the College's VLE. Staff also access the programme and unit details on the VLE which contains a repository of documents which are subject to number and version control.

1.23 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation A2.2 to be met in principle.

1.24 The review team assessed a range of documentation including the College self-evaluation document, programme specifications, student handbooks, minutes of meetings and the College Quality Manual. The team also met staff and discussed a variety of topics relating to the maintenance of definitive records of programmes.

1.25 The College has taken the required steps in ensuring that its version of the HND Business 2016 programme specification is up to date. Prior to its approval at Academic Board in August 2016, the College undertook an external verification process to ensure that it met Pearson's requirements.

1.26 The College is aware of the challenges related to teaching a programme across two different programme specifications and have held a number of workshops to facilitate staff discussion and further understanding of these challenges. All students starting in September 2016 are taught under the new specification and the College has a number of cohorts and legacy cohorts continuing to be taught under the 2010 specification.

1.27 Students confirmed that they had a good understanding of their programme prior to entry and are aware of the awarding organisation. Programmes publicised on the website clearly state the awarding organisation and logos are clearly displayed.

1.28 The College clearly articulates the scope of the HND programme and the associated pathways that students, in consultation with the College, are able to select. Pathway options are discussed with students during induction and throughout the first year of study. Students are aware of the intended learning outcomes, find the assignment briefs helpful in determining these and can access them through the VLE. Students are aware of

what is required in order to progress onto the next level of their course and the College has updated its progression criteria in line with the new 2016 programme specification.

1.29 The College issues a student handbook and unit guides which contain details of learning outcomes, assignment methods and required core reading materials. The student handbook contains links to the Pearson website which makes clear the relevant qualification and Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.30 The review team concludes that Expectation A2.2 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College complies with its responsibility for the maintenance and approval of each programme in line with the requirements set out by the awarding organisation.

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

1.31 The College works with its awarding organisation, Pearson, regarding its delivery of HND provision, using Pearson documentation regarding quality assurance processes relating to academic standards. The structure and level for the HND is secured through the QCF.

1.32 Respective responsibilities for programme approval are described in the responsibilities checklist. Pearson is responsible for curriculum design and development. The College is responsible for assessment and internal verification, subject to oversight by external verifiers, appointed by Pearson. The latter provides information about its awards. Overall responsibility for ensuring that academic standards are secure and established when a programme is developed and approved lies with Pearson.

1.33 Pearson undertakes regular visits to the College to ensure that its requirements are being met. There are two processes in place for this comprising the Academic Management Review (AMR) and the visit by the Standards Verifier who is responsible for the scrutiny of assignment briefs set by teaching staff and also for the operation of the internal moderation process, both in terms of setting assignments and marking and the provision of student feedback.

1.34 The College has engaged with the Standards Verifier process since 2012 and has been subject to three AMRs for the last three years. The College complies with the requirements of Pearson in respect of meeting the required academic standards.

1.35 As required by Pearson, the College has produced its own version of the programme specification for both the 2010 and the 2016 specifications. The College specifications are based upon the generic specification, with reference to the appropriate Subject Benchmark Statement.

1.36 Programme design includes setting assessment activities at the appropriate level for the qualification and checking through internal verification and Standards Verifier processes. The College designs assessments to meet the prescribed learning outcomes. The College has not developed any new programmes since the introduction of the Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (EDSML) which is not currently offered.

1.37 The College has a process for the development of new programmes, should they be offered in the future. According to the Higher Education Strategy 2014-17 and the Regent Group Plan 2020, the College has aspirations to secure a well-regarded university as a strategic collaborative partner to enable students to progress to top-up degrees (see Expectation B1).

1.38 The policies and procedures of the College allow Expectation A3.1 to be met in principle.

1.39 The review team examined a range of documentation, including College strategies, programme specifications, AMRs and Standards Verifier reports. Internal processes were discussed with senior, support and teaching staff, as well as students in order to ascertain their engagement with the described internal and external processes.

1.40 Pearson's requirements and information relating to the setting of academic standards in terms of programme design and approval are widely understood by academic and support staff and, in meetings, staff also demonstrated to the review team a clear understanding of the internal processes relating to the design and approval of the HND Business programme.

1.41 Pearson documentation, academic regulations, intended learning outcomes and assessment requirements are included in the student handbooks which also contain hyperlinks to the awarding organisation. Programme specifications are made clear to students during the induction process.

1.42 The responsibilities checklist that the College has with Pearson demonstrates awareness of the responsibilities for maintaining academic standards and ensuring appropriate quality of learning opportunities and there is a constructive relationship between College staff and the Pearson's Standards Verifiers, who also provide internal verifier training for staff.

1.43 Students confirm that they receive a copy of the Student Handbook which contains hyperlinks to the definitive Pearson programme specification. The Student Handbook (2015-16) contains a range of information about the programme of study and it is also available on the College's VLE. Students also receive the programme unit guides at induction and they are clear about the range of units on offer at the College. These are available on the College's website and the College's VLE.

1.44 The review team concludes that Expectation A3.1 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College's higher education provision is developed and approved in accordance with the academic frameworks and regulations of its awarding organisation.

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

1.45 The awarding organisation, Pearson, ensures that, through its own programme approval processes, the College's HND Business programme meets threshold standards and sits at the appropriate point of the QCF. Credit is awarded only when the achievement of learning outcomes has been demonstrated by assessment in line with the programme specification and unit guides. Pearson achieves this through a process of external standards verification and checking of the College's internal verification processes. Programme documentation identifies the awarding of credit where the achievement of learning outcomes occurs.

1.46 The College is responsible for the delivery of the approved HND programme through its partnership with the awarding organisation and assessing students in line with the programme specification and unit guides. The responsibilities of the College and Pearson are set out in the responsibilities checklist. Academic standards for the HND programme are embedded within programme and unit specifications.

1.47 Programme content in the programme specification is mapped against the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements in Business, Human Resources, Accounting and Marketing. The College selects units from the approved Pearson listing and designs its own assessment instruments, which are approved externally. Pearson, through its own annual reporting processes, ensures that marks are properly and accurately recorded.

1.48 The College ensures that staff members are appropriately qualified to deliver programmes at the associated academic level. Threshold standards and staff teaching standards are maintained through internal verification and assessor training provided by Pearson and through the lesson observation and appraisal process. Information is disseminated internally through Assessment Regulations and the Internal Verification Policy and Procedure.

1.49 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation A3.2 to be met in principle.

1.50 The review team considered the effectiveness of the College's practices and procedures by evaluating assessment regulations, the Internal Verification Policy and Procedure, programme documentation including unit guides, Standards Verifier reports, Pearson AMR reports, Assessment Board minutes, teaching staff CVs, and staff development activity. The review team also held meetings with students and senior and teaching staff.

1.51 The design and approval of the programme and units by Pearson and their implementation by the College follow agreed systems and procedure and are aligned with

the Quality Code for Higher Education, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*.

1.52 Approved programme specifications, unit guides and grade descriptors, are implemented as appropriate. This ensures that the qualifications are aligned with the appropriate level of the FHEQ and the learning outcomes defined. The credit requirements on the programme are determined by the awarding organisation.

1.53 Staff are appropriately academically qualified, most to master's level and teaching staff confirmed that they were clear about assessment methods and the awarding organisation's criteria and terminology relating to assessment methods.

1.54 Assessment and design processes undertaken by the College are consistently and accurately linked to programme aims and learning outcomes and confirmed through internal verification processes. Following internal verification of assessment outcomes, the Assessment Board confirms the achievement of programme outcomes and the award of credit. Legacy issues related to previous years' student progression and achievement are being successfully managed and students are achieving in line with the College's action plan following previous QAA visits.

1.55 The Standards Verifier employed by Pearson confirms the maintenance of academic standards. College internal verifiers consider merit and distinction as defined in the Pearson award framework, with the Standards Verifier reports highlighting the contextualisation and consistent application of the grade criteria.

1.56 The arrangements for the award of credits and awards are effective and underpinned by a range of appropriate assessment methods which give students the opportunity to confirm that learning outcomes have been achieved. Students were able to confirm that they had a clear understanding of relating theory and practice and they were satisfied that the range of assessment methods adopted by teaching staff was satisfactory.

1.57 The review team concludes that Expectation A3.2 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College's arrangements for the award of credits and awards are effective and underpinned by a range of appropriate assessment methods.

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

1.58 Responsibility for annual monitoring and periodic review is shared between the College and its awarding organisation, Pearson. Pearson operates two systems to ensure that the monitoring and review of the HND Business programme meets UK threshold academic standards. Pearson provides the AMR report to the College and the Standards Verifier process.

1.59 The Academic Board of the College has, in its remit, responsibility for safeguarding and assuring the academic integrity and quality of higher education programmes at the College and is responsible for the development and oversight of academic standards, quality of learning experience and external points of reference.

1.60 The College produces its own Annual Course Quality Monitoring Report which allows for more explicit consideration of higher education matters and brings together matters relating to the operation of the higher education provision. The process of annual monitoring is discussed in detail in Expectation B8.

1.61 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation A3.3 to be met in principle.

1.62 The review team scrutinised the College's monitoring and review procedures and confirmed that they reflect its contractual responsibilities with Pearson. The review team was able to definitively establish where the College-level responsibility lies for assuring the appropriateness of academic standards, due to the specific operational and functional reporting mechanisms within the College's quality assurance cycle and through meetings with staff.

1.63 Pearson undertakes standards verification visits which comprise sampling of students' work and it also prepares an annual AMR which assesses the College's ability to meet seven quality objectives. There are no recommendations for the College to address in its latest report.

1.64 The College prepares a useful commentary subsequent to the AMR, addressing the objectives which then becomes part of the assessment by Pearson that the College meets its requirements. The plan is a helpful starting point in the monitoring and review of provision and includes action to be taken, for example, regarding the admissions processes. Effective action has been taken regarding the improvement of the student selection processes which are now aligned with the Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*.

1.65 The College produces action plans for any recommendations made in the AMR report and the Standards Verifier report. The review team could evidence that recommendations are followed up at the next AMR or Standards Verifier visit, for example, checking the adequacy of feedback before work is returned to students.

1.66 The College has a comprehensive quality cycle framework which identifies quality assurance activities and functions. The Course Board meets termly and considers the AMR and the Annual Course Monitoring reports. It reports to the Academic Board and is responsible for the subsequent action plans, monitoring and completion of actions.

1.67 The review team concludes that Expectation A3.3 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College has appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure that the monitoring and review of programmes are carried out adequately.

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

1.68 The awarding organisation has ultimate responsibility for making use of external and independent expertise in order to set and maintain academic standards. The College is responsible for ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to the feedback provided by a Standards Verifier who acts as the external examiner on the management and delivery of its HND programme.

1.69 The Standards Verifier appointed by Pearson oversees the maintenance of academic standards. The College uses the Standards Verifier reports for annual review and action planning (see also Expectation B7).

1.70 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation A3.4 to be met in principle.

1.71 The review team considered the effectiveness of these practices and procedures by examining documentation including Standards Verifier reports, AMR reports and the minutes of the Academic Board, Course Board and Course Management meetings. The review team also discussed details with senior management and teaching staff, as well as with a representative from the awarding organisation, and students.

1.72 The Standards Verifier's reports are considered by programme staff, as evidenced in AMR reports and responses are included in programme-level action plans. The Standards Verifier's annual report is considered by the Course Management meeting, Course Board and Academic Board. Senior management also consider the responses and monitor the actions taken through the use of a dedicated action plan.

1.73 The College's annual monitoring process makes full use of the Standards Verifier to ensure that threshold standards are maintained and that the academic standards of Pearson are maintained.

1.74 The review team concludes that Expectation A3.4 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College has a clear and effective relationship with its awarding organisation which ensures the use of appropriate external and independent expertise.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation: Summary of findings

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

1.76 All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met and the level of risk is judged to be low.

1.77 The review team concludes that maintenance of academic standards on behalf of its awarding organisation **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 College follows the procedures identified by the awarding organisation for the design and approval of programmes. The College's Higher Education Strategic Plan confirms that the College does not have plans to extend its provision in the near future, but it has entered into discussions with some potential partners. The decision to offer new programmes is subject to a process of business planning by the CEO/Executive Principal, Director of Strategic Development, Academic Principal and Director of Quality Enhancement, with presentation to Board for Group-wide approval. The College is approved to offer two Pearson programmes (HND Business) and the level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (EDSML). The College is not currently offering the EDSML programme due to the limited market.

2.2 Students are provided with a Student Handbook which is available on the College's VLE. The revised Student Handbook does not specifically reflect the new programme specification, providing a hyperlink only to the Pearson website. There is no substantive programme handbook for students. The Pearson website provides the definitive course content and the full range of mandatory and specialist units which are available for study at levels 4 and 5.

2.3 The College has responsibility for producing its own HND programme specification which is based on the generic Pearson specification. In preparation for the delivery of the new programme specification produced by Pearson for September 2016, the College's programme specification was considered at a recent Course Management meeting and approved by the Academic Board in August 2016.

2.4 The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that the design of the HND Business programme and its pathways in terms of mandatory and optional units complies with the requirements of Pearson to enable students to claim the certificated award for their programme of study.

2.5 The College has produced a useful summary analysis of the key changes needed for the new programme specification. This includes a review of assessment strategies, unit pathways, and student progression processes. The Director of Studies is responsible for making these decisions following consultation with the CEO/Executive Principal, Academic Principal and Unit Leaders. Unit pathways are considered and aligned with student demand and teaching expertise.

2.6 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B1 to be met in principle.

2.7 In order to test the Expectation in relation to the College's practice, the review team met staff and students and considered a range of documentation, including the Student Handbook, relevant programme specifications and unit documentation, along with the College's website and VLE.

2.8 The process of determining the choice of units is clear and contextualised. Students confirm that unit pathways are explained to them during the interview procedure and through the induction process and they understood which units are core and optional. Students also confirm that, where appropriate, they are able to change their unit pathways.

2.9 Teaching staff and students provide evaluation of units through unit level reports and student satisfaction surveys. A recent unit evaluation survey (January 2016) provided the template for the student submission. Unit evaluation surveys provide the College with useful information in its planning and review processes to inform programme design and delivery. In response to student feedback and, in alignment with employer needs, the College has selected two new unit options to support the theme of student employability which are specifically related to business innovation and entrepreneurship (Unit 8 Innovation and Commercialisation; Unit 9 Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management). Employability skills are contained within core units as well as in the three optional units.

2.10 Consideration of learning resources is part of the College's design process, and the Course Boards provide the opportunity for teaching staff to identify up to date and appropriate higher education learning resources for current and future studies.

2.11 The review team concludes that Expectation B1 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College's processes for the design, development and approval of programmes are clear and systematic with evidence of an effective planning cycle and the formal consideration of data.

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

2.12 The College has responsibility for recruitment and admissions and for designing and using appropriate policies. Pearson, as the awarding organisation, specifies the minimum entry criteria onto a programme. The College has a Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy and Procedure which outlines the process for setting entry requirements, recognition of prior learning, appeals and complaints and the recruitment, selection and admission processes. The policy is available on the College website.

2.13 Responsibility for marketing the College's HND programmes, recruiting and admitting students rests with the College's marketing, recruitment and admissions teams. The College produces a prospectus which contains information about the HND Business programmes and contains appropriate information relating to Pearson, the programme and course requirements and the methods of assessments.

2.14 All students admitted to the College are interviewed by a member of College staff. In 2015, a business-related task was introduced to provide greater understanding of students' motivations for studying the HND programme and create an additional element to the selection process. This was discontinued from September 2016 and replaced by an extended interview. Students who do not speak English as a first language require an International English Language Testing System score of 5.5 or above and the College provides additional English classes. The process for selecting students is led by the Admissions Manager with the final decision resting with the Vice-Principal.

2.15 The College has an induction policy and has introduced an induction survey to gather feedback on students' induction experience. Induction consists of a number of talks given by members of College staff relating to a range of academic and non-academic matters including an introduction to key staff members, information about student representatives, specific course information and student welfare and advice.

2.16 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B2 to be met in principle.

2.17 The review team met students and academic and support staff responsible for recruitment, selection and admission. Additionally, the team reviewed a range of documentation, the College website, and a range of policies relating to student recruitment, selection and admission. The review team also explored previous concerns relating to completion and retention rates and discussed with staff specific measures introduced to help ensure that all students selected are able and motivated to complete their programme of study.

2.18 The College has taken a number of deliberative steps to improve the process for recruiting and selecting students in recent years. These include a mapping exercise of Expectation B2 and the development of an action plan on enhancing the recruitment and admissions process. Collectively this has led to the implementation of additional steps to the selection process including the introduction of a business-related task (which has been

reviewed and subsequently discontinued), an induction survey and further policies relating to recognition of prior learning, admission through work experience and a more formalised approach to providing information, advice and guidance.

2.19 An additional emphasis has been placed on understanding students' personal motivations for applying to the HND programme during the selection process and this has, in turn, had a positive impact on the College's admissions.

2.20 The admissions process is made operational through an admission flow chart and interview form for use by College staff conducting interviews. The interview form includes a section for staff to discuss with students any additional study requirements which are then passed to the Operations Team for further action. Students confirm that they had all undertaken an interview prior to being offered a place at the College.

2.21 Applicant enquiries are monitored via the student reception and are reported by the Operations Team through the College's committee structure. The College has made progress with capturing and auditing student data and moved to a system of auditing all student files from June 2016. The College produces admissions reports following each cohort intake which includes data on the number of enquiries, number of completed applications, the number of places offered and the number of those that enrol onto the course. The admissions report provides an opportunity for the College to identify areas that have worked well and elements of the recruitment process which could be improved. However, although these reports identify areas for improvement these are not always operationalised through action plans and actions are not given timescales or attributable to particular staff or departments. This has led to a recommendation at Expectation B8.

2.22 Student induction consists of an induction meeting on the students' first day, which covers a range of topics including health and safety, student representation, course information and pastoral care. The College captures feedback on the induction process through an induction survey. Students are given an induction pack containing helpful and useful information and are satisfied with their induction experience.

2.23 Unsuccessful applicants are given the opportunity to receive feedback on their application and, where appropriate, are offered advice on alternative suitable programmes. Students are able to inform the College of any additional requirements or adjustments that they require making through the application and interview process. Students are also able to appeal an unsuccessful application via email using the College's appeal procedure.

2.24 The review team concludes that Expectation B2 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College has a clear policy and procedure for admissions and regularly reviews its operation.

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

2.25 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy sets out the College's overall approach to learning and teaching and contributes to its approach to quality assurance. The strategy is reviewed and developed every two years. Any revisions are submitted to the Course Management meetings for consideration and to the Academic Board for approval.

2.26 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy is overseen by the Academic Principal and its content is initially developed by the Director of Quality Enhancement, in consultation with academic staff. The College regularly reviews learning and teaching through a variety of methods, most notably the Course Management meeting and Course Board meetings. Course Management meetings take place to discuss delivery issues and good practice in teaching and learning is shared among staff through training activities and through academic workshops where teaching staff give presentations.

2.27 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy is supported by the Learning Resources Strategy 2014-17 which is in turn supported by the Learning Resources Strategy Action Plan. The College developed its first Learning Resources Strategy in 2014 for the period 2014-16. This has been reviewed, updated and revised to apply to the 2015-17 period. The Learning Resources Strategy includes, as an objective, the production of a written annual review of learning resources, which is informed by staff and student feedback and is considered by senior management and the Academic Board. Staff feedback on, and requests for, learning resources, are forwarded to the Director of Studies, who has bi-weekly meetings with Unit Leaders. Feedback from students regarding their opinions and requests regarding learning resources is obtained through the student learning resources survey which is considered by the Student Representative Committee, the Courses Management meeting and the Academic Board.

2.28 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B3 to be met in principle.

2.29 The review team discussed details associated with teaching and learning with senior and teaching staff, as well as with students. A range of evidence was considered, including the VLE, strategies and policies, Standards Verifier and Academic Management Review reports, records of staff qualifications and teaching staff observation and appraisal forms and records.

2.30 The College evaluates the quality of the learner experience by monitoring, reviewing and continuously improving the quality of teaching through classroom observations carried out by the senior management. Teaching observations are comprehensive, highlighting both good practice and areas for future development. The College intends to implement a system of peer observation in the near future. A summary report of teaching observations carried out through the year is considered by the Academic Board. This report contains suggestions for enhancing teaching, which are communicated to teaching staff and also highlights areas for staff development.

2.31 The College requires all academic staff to have relevant professional experience as well as an academic qualification. The majority of staff hold a teaching qualification, or otherwise have substantial teaching experience. Staff CVs confirm that academic staff have relevant professional experience and that most staff are qualified to master's level or above and have a teaching qualification. Additionally, the College is required by Pearson, as part of its Academic Management Review, to confirm that staff are appropriately qualified to teach.

2.32 The teaching team is effectively supported and there are regular Staff Development Sessions. Teaching staff have benefited from internal verifier training provided by Pearson and other training sessions such as Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance assessors' training provided by an external company; briefings on the application of the Quality Code, mandatory Safeguarding for Vulnerable Adults training and ongoing Health and Safety training. The College has taken out access subscription of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to provide externally facilitated workshops to support staff to become fellows.

2.33 There is a clear policy for the recruitment of staff and new members of staff attend an induction process which includes provision of a staff handbook setting out their teaching and administrative duties. The College requires staff to participate in the staff annual appraisal process which is detailed and developmental. Each appraisal is followed up with a Personal Development Plan which forms the basis for the next year's appraisal. Appraisal records are comprehensive but are not currently explicitly informed by the results of teaching observations.

2.34 An induction process for students, together with unit guides, introduces teaching and learning strategies and methods to be used. Advice is also provided on how to complete programmes of study successfully. Assessment for each programme requires students to demonstrate their ability in analytical, critical and creative thinking. Teaching staff foster those abilities through the preparation of formative and summative assessments in such a way as to encourage students to be self-motivated and to carry out independent research and analysis. Students' views on the quality and comprehensiveness of the induction process are elicited through a student induction survey. Students are very positive about the College's induction process.

2.35 The College regularly updates its action plans to support the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and the Learning Resources Strategy and monitors progress with actions identified. However, the action plans, while identifying responsible individuals, list the majority of timelines as 'ongoing' and in the Evaluation/Comment section there is a lack of key performance indicators. This has led to the recommendation in section B8.

2.36 Annual Course Quality Monitoring (ACQM) reports provide evaluation of student feedback on induction, unit evaluations, and learning resources. Student feedback on teaching is very positive, although students identified the need to improve on the time taken for students to receive summative feedback on submitted work. The monitoring reports focus on key issues from action plans, student recruitment and admissions, student attendance and attendance monitoring, retention, student achievement, progression and awards and submission rates for assignments, Standards Verifier and AMR reports, and QAA reviews and monitoring visits. Comparison of the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 ACQM reports shows a marked improvement in the analysis of student data in respect of the level of detail and numerical breakdown. The most recent (2015-16) report gives no information on submission or achievement rates at unit level.

2.37 Evidence of evaluation of teaching and learning, including resources, is considered in each report. The VLE, which is called the Higher Education Learning Platform (HELP), contains complete programme information, including tutor notes and links to both e-books

and e-journals. Students confirm that they have access to all necessary programme materials, as well as to Standards Verifier reports, with adequate opportunity to discuss suggestions and issues of concern. The College, in order to enhance the teaching and learning provision, is in the process of developing the VLE, which is currently being piloted with selected staff members and a cohort of students. Following the pilot phase, the College intends to roll out the new system to the whole College later in this academic year. Training for staff on the new system has already begun and training for students is planned for early in the academic year.

2.38 The review team concludes that Expectation B3 is met. The associated risk is low because the College has clear and effective procedures to support its learning and teaching activities and that students are provided with a supportive learning environment.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.39 The College has a strategic approach to providing, monitoring and evaluating resources which enable students to develop academically, personally and professionally. The overarching strategy is the Strategic Plan, which is supported by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and the Learning Resources Strategy and is supported by other policies including the Policy of Equal Opportunity. The biennial Learning Resources Strategy is considered by the Course Management meeting and approved by the Academic Board. The services provided to support student development and achievement are regularly monitored and evaluated through the Learning Resources Strategy, together with Learning Resources surveys and action plans.

2.40 Feedback is collected from students at the end of each course and includes an assessment of teachers, facilities and general course provision. Data is analysed and incorporated in Unit Leader reports and informs an analysis by the Course Management meeting and the Academic Board of student opinions and for the planning of appropriate responses. Action plans are produced to improve the quality and development of learning opportunities.

2.41 The College has a small library which has been designated a quiet study space and includes key texts and journals. It is managed by the Student Welfare Officer who is present during the Library opening hours. Students can also use the local public libraries at Brent and Wembley and the College subscribes to online journal access.

2.42 IT facilities include a computer room open from 09.00 to 21.00 each weekday during term-time. Students are provided with an email address which they must use in order to submit assignments through the plagiarism-detection software. The compulsory use of the College email address also helps with communication between students and the College.

2.43 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B4 to be met in principle.

2.44 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutinising minutes of meetings, College strategies and associated action plans, student guidance information and programme specifications, and through discussions with a range of staff and students.

2.45 The College sets out its strategic approach to the development of learning resources in several policies and associated action plans. Students confirm that they are provided with a Student Handbook at induction and unit guides at the beginning of their course. Schemes of work in unit guides link topics explicitly to learning outcomes and assessment criteria are also provided. Students confirmed that the information provided by the College is helpful and timely.

2.46 The Student Welfare Officer is based in the Library and has advertised office hours for consultation although the College operates an open-door policy and students can seek help and guidance informally outside of these hours. Students are satisfied with the level of support received from the College. The Student Welfare Officer has developed a useful guide on Welfare/Safeguarding support which sets out guidance to staff on a range of issues such as bullying or harassment, eating disorders or stress. This includes guidance on

external agencies for support. Cohort administrators have been newly created to provide further additional support to individual cohorts of students. Although a range of staff are available to support students, it was not clear how staff support or refer students with specific non-academic issues with only informal pastoral support and no evidence of direct links with external support services. There has been some staff training in relation to supporting vulnerable adults but staff would benefit from further training and dedicated resources to be able to effectively support students studying at the College. The review team **recommends**, that by April 2017, the College further develops the pastoral care for students.

2.47 The annual monitoring report by QAA in February 2016 identified shortcomings in the progression and achievement of students at the College. The College responded by setting up a Retention, Achievement and Completion Task Group to improve success rates for both progression and achievement of students including legacy students. The introduction of the Task Group has been effective and over 100 legacy students have now completed their programme with the College on course to meet its targets set out in the action plan following the QAA report. To track progress among legacy students, the College has created the role of legacy student cohort leader to offer tailored support to specific legacy cohorts. The College has also supported legacy students by providing them with access to both digital and physical learning resources in order to support them to successfully complete their course.

2.48 The College has a Policy of Equal Opportunity although it refers only to staff employment and is not monitored or evaluated in any way for effectiveness. More widely, the principles of equality and diversity are not embedded within College policies. The review team **recommends** that, by April 2017, the College ensures that equality and diversity principles are embedded within College policies for staff and students. Action plans are developed to support the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and the Learning Resources Strategy. These are the principal strategies to support learning resources for students. As set out in Section B3, the action plans, while identifying responsible individuals, list the majority of timelines as 'ongoing' and in the Evaluation/Comment section there is a lack of key performance indicators. This has led to a recommendation in Section B8.

2.49 The College provides a range of study skills tutorial sessions on a weekly basis which cover, among other things, assignment writing, using computer software, primary and secondary research, and referencing. Study skills tutorials also help students develop employability skills and support students in articulating their knowledge, skills and experience when applying for employment opportunities towards the end of their two year programme through the inclusion of sessions on CV preparation and interview techniques. It was not clear whether these sessions were compulsory or optional. Study skills are not currently embedded as part of programmes.

2.50 In response to student feedback, the College has amended the opening hours of the Library to enable those students studying in the evening to have access to the Library until 21.00. Core texts for each programme pathway are available for consultation on a reference basis. Programme information and College policies and procedures are available to students on the VLE which is uploaded by Unit Leaders and checked for accuracy and completeness by the Director of Studies. In addition to the VLE, there is also access to online journals through a College subscription to an online journal provider. Piloting is currently underway for a new, more interactive VLE that the College anticipates will be rolled out for the use of all students later in the current academic year. Students confirm that they are satisfied with the resources available to them and confirm that the College provides them with a College email address at induction which gains them access to all College online resources and through which they receive all the necessary information, including timetables and staff contact details.

2.51 The College maintains records of student applications, including entry qualifications, entrance tests and admission interviews. Records are also maintained on student progress, including minutes of pastoral care meetings. A new student information system is in the process of development to enable complete tracking by tutors and senior staff and improve the quality of student data.

2.52 The review team concludes that Expectation B4 is met. The associated level of risk is moderate, as although the College offers a range of support services to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, there is lack of clarity about responsibilities and there are some shortcomings.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.53 The College engages with the student body through a number of methods. These include meetings with cohort student representatives and engagement with the Student President, feedback collected through a range of student surveys, specific feedback generated by students captured on an informal basis or via the Students' Complaints Log and formal representation through the College governance structure.

2.54 The College produces a Student Charter which has been recently updated and reviewed with students at the Student Representative Committee. The Charter details what students can expect from the College and what is expected of students.

2.55 The College has four intakes of students each year onto the HND Business programme and the College has reflected this in its student representation system. Each cohort elects two student representatives who are invited to attend the Student Representative Committee meeting. The Student Representative Committee meets at least three times a year and is chaired by the Student President or a member of staff if requested to do so by the students.

2.56 Election of student representatives typically takes place within programme tutorials or lectures, and students are encouraged to nominate themselves by visits from the Academic Principal or the Student Welfare Officer. Election of the Student President takes place at the Student Representative Committee and the vote is overseen by the Academic Principal.

2.57 The role of the student representatives is outlined in the student representative handbook, which outlines the student representative system, benefits of being a student representative, the roles and responsibilities, a guide to committee and board meetings and how student representative meetings should be conducted. The role of the Student President is outlined in the Student President Role descriptor which outlines the requirement to meet student representatives at least twice a semester; communicate with students and disseminate information; meet senior College staff at least once a semester; chair the Student Representative Committee; and represent students as a member of Academic Board. Student concerns discussed at the Student Representative Committee are formally recorded in the Student Complaints Log which is taken to Academic Board for formal discussion.

2.58 The Student President and two other student representatives are members of both Academic Board and Course Board where issues relating to teaching, learning, governance and a range of student experience-related matters are discussed. Currently, students are not members of the newly formed Higher Education Quality Committee although the College has identified the need for student representation at this committee and intends to include student representatives in the future.

2.59 Students are able to feed back on their teaching and learning experiences through a variety of different student surveys. These include the College Induction Survey, Course Evaluation Surveys, Learning Resources Survey and a College Exit Survey.

2.60 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B5 to be met in principle.

2.61 The review team considered a range of documentation including minutes of the Student Representative Committee, minutes of College committees, the Student Charter, and a number of student surveys, College survey reports and associated Action Plans. The review team met students, student representatives, and staff.

2.62 The Student President has responsibility for chairing the Student Representative Committee, although, on a number of occasions by request of the Student President or student representatives present, a member of staff has chaired the committee.

2.63 Student attendance and engagement in the committee structure remains a challenge, given the number of mature students in the College, with other responsibilities and work commitments outside the College which often means that they are unable to attend. Although the Student President and two other student representatives are members of both Academic and Course Board, the extent to which they are active participants and able to contribute effectively to discussions on topics relating to the enhancement of their educational experience is unclear.

2.64 Students confirm that they are elected by a vote in their class and subsequently meet the Academic Principal who explains the role and responsibilities of a student representative. Staff support the student representative system by explaining the benefits to students in class.

2.65 The College provides a number of documents to support students in their role as student representatives and also to support the role of Student President, including the Student Representative Policy and the Student Representative Handbook. However, the College's continuing participation in supporting student representatives to effectively fulfil their role is less clear. Although information is provided during induction and through classes, there does not appear to be any formal training or additional support to enable student representatives to actively and effectively contribute an input into discussions relating to their student experience. The review team **recommends** that, by April 2017, the College further develops the student representative system by providing formal training to enable students to more effectively fulfil their role.

2.66 Student engagement often takes place informally with a strong relationship between staff and students which enables feedback to be responded to on an individual basis. The College has responded to student feedback, for example, by implementing a request to change the in-house library opening times. Students confirm that staff are very approachable and they like the open-door policy in operation at the College. Students additionally highlighted the support from tutors and communication from staff as being particularly positive elements of their student experience.

2.67 The review team concludes that Expectation B5 is met. The associated risk is low as the College has clear and deliberate policies to engage students in the work of the College although this could be improved by providing formal training for student representatives.

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

2.68 The College processes of assessment operate in accordance with the academic frameworks and regulations of the awarding organisation, Pearson. The College uses standard Pearson documentation for the issuing of assignment briefs and schemes of work to students. All assignment briefs are standardised through the internal verification process and contain assessment and grading criteria.

2.69 The College continues to align its policies and procedures with the guidance in the Quality Code and has completed its mapping of all the relevant sections. This ensures that College policies align with the guidance in the Quality Code, for example the College's Formative Assessment Policy. The College has used *Chapter B6* of the Code to produce additional helpful guidance to staff for further developing the assessment process.

2.70 Assessment activities are overseen by the Assessment Board which is a subcommittee of Academic Board and the College has a policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning. Students may apply for an extension to a submissions date under extenuating circumstances which has to be approved by the Academic Principal or nominee/Vice Principal to ensure consistency in the decision-making process. Appeals information is also available in the Student Handbook and the VLE and students confirm that they are familiar with the location of this information should they wish to lodge an appeal or complaint.

2.71 All students are provided with written guidelines to the grading criteria at the start of each semester. Students are provided with both summative and formative feedback. Formative assessments are designed to help students understand the unit material more fully and prepare for the summative assessment. Summative assessments are set as Assignment Briefs in accordance with the requirements of Pearson.

2.72 All assignments require a statement of authenticity by the student which is clearly specified in the assignment briefs, with submission requiring the use of plagiarism-detection software. The College has produced a helpful guide to plagiarism which enables students to understand matters relating to plagiarism. The College has an Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures which is used when academic misconduct is suspected or evidenced and students are made aware of these procedures at induction.

2.73 The College undertakes unit surveys at the end of each semester which are collated and considered by the Academic Board. Student views properly inform the delivery of the programme. The College has a policy and procedure, approved by Academic Board, for the recognition of prior learning. The policy addresses both entry onto to the programme through relevant work experience, and for advanced standing where the applicant has previously studied and passed units on the HND Business programme. The Vice-Principal has responsibility for the oversight of admission through recognition of prior learning.

2.74 The policies and procedure of the College would allow Expectation B6 to be met in principle.

2.75 The review team scrutinised a range of documentation relating to assessment including the awarding organisation's regulatory systems, College policies and regulations, standards verifier reports, minutes of the Assessment Board, assignment briefs and schemes of work. The review team explored the details of assessment with teaching staff, an external representative of the awarding organisation, and students and had a demonstration of the VLE.

2.76 The College makes effective use of, and complies with, Pearson's regulatory processes for assessment. The College continues to produce its Brief Guide to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is regularly updated and provides staff with useful guidance. The College aligns its delivery with the latest guidance from Pearson, which incorporates the requirements of the QCF.

2.77 Staff provide feedback in an appropriate manner using assignment coversheets. The Vice-Principal signs off key information such as assignment briefs, using a series of templates. Assignment briefs and internal verification procedures are satisfactory and widely understood by staff and students.

2.78 Staff CVs indicate that teachers are appropriately qualified to assess students and that they receive training regarding the application of the assessment processes. Tutors are required to provide feedback on assessed work according to the College's Assessed Work Feedback Policy. Unit guides show a limited range of assessment modes and the College is considering the implementation of a wider range of types of assessment to include work-based projects and reflective journals.

2.79 The marking of students' assessed work occurs systematically using standardised sheets and internal verification is consistently applied so that standards are maintained. Students receive formative feedback in a timely manner but summative feedback can take much longer. The College is working towards ensuring that students are provided with summative feedback within an average of four weeks after the final submission of work. The final results are subject to internal verification which normally takes two weeks and is given to students as soon as possible after the meeting of the Assessment Board.

2.80 Assignment briefs and grade marking schemes are set by and internally verified by Unit Leaders and then internally verified through peer review. An approved template is used to record marking by tutors, with comments being recorded electronically. Marking is internally verified and requires that a sample of grades is taken, including referred work, and a sample taken for each Unit. This ensures that grading is consistent and internally reliable. The process is overseen by the Director of Studies and then by the Standards Verifier on behalf of Pearson. The Director of Studies has responsibility for oversight and acts as the Lead Internal Verifier. The College's processes for internal verification comply with the standards of the awarding organisation and the Standards Verifier annual reports confirm this. The College has satisfactorily addressed a recommendation from the Standards Verifier to provide less generic feedback to students and supply a specifically tailored response to the individual student.

2.81 Pearson's procedures and documentation for the assessment of students is monitored through the standardised templates. The College's internal verification policy sets out the system of internal verification and how it is applied. Staff confirm their understanding of assessing at differing levels and the processes involved, and students confirm that they have a clear understanding of assessment regulations and the importance of submitting their own work.

2.82 Students are clear about the stated aims of the programme and what they have to do to achieve their learning outcomes. Students are informed about the level of the taught

modules and are clear about what they need to achieve in order to successfully progress from year one to year two of the programme.

2.83 Students are aware of the requirements to achieve credit and the range of assessment methods, grading criteria and unit levels. According to a recent Unit Evaluation Survey over 80 per cent of students thought that their assessments are appropriate. The VLE includes the assessment information available to staff and students and the assessment information and timing of assessments is provided in advance, enabling students to plan their workload.

2.84 The College has an effective approach to suspected cases of plagiarism and students are clear about the importance of submitting their own work and the processes that must be complied with, such as signing authenticity statements prior to the submission of assignments through anti-plagiarism software.

2.85 Policies and procedures for the assessment of students are in place and effective. Assessment methods are designed and approved by Pearson to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Criteria and expectations for assessment are presented to students at induction and they are clearly understood. Standards Verifier reports and annual monitoring reports provide evidence of appropriate assessment practices to ensure that standards are being met, and action plans arising from these are effectively completed.

2.86 The College has extended the teaching week to 42 per year and adjusted the academic calendar to award credits through Assessment Boards within the calendar year of students commencing their programme. The College anticipates that this initiative will enable it to increase year one success rates in time to allow progression to year two. The College has made good progress with improving the retention and achievement rates of legacy cohorts and is set to achieve its benchmark targets on or before the agreed deadline dates. From 2016, the new Pearson regulations in relation to progress from year one to year two will require the achievement of 90 credits.

2.87 The review team concludes that Expectation B6 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College makes effective use of the awarding organisation's academic framework, in addition to its own procedures.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.88 The awarding organisation, Pearson, is responsible for the appointment of external examiners. The College follows Pearson's procedures for the external examining process. The Standards Verifier for the programme acts as the external examiner. The Standards Verifier normally visits the College and meets students and programme staff annually. The Standards Verifier role is explained to students and the reports, the format of which is determined by Pearson, are made available to them through the College's VLE.

2.89 Standards Verifier reports are reviewed by the Course Management meeting, Course Board and the Academic Board as part of the annual monitoring process. Pearson maintains oversight of the Standards Verifier process through its Academic Management Review which serves as an additional check that Standards Verifier recommendations and essential actions have been carried out satisfactorily. The Standards Verifier checks on the internal verification requirements placed on the College by Pearson.

2.90 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B7 to be met in principle.

2.91 The review team examined a range of documentation including the Standards Verifiers' reports and associated action plan and responses, minutes of relevant committees and meetings where Standards Verifier reports and Academic Management Review reports are considered, and action plans generated from those reports. Details were explored through discussions in meetings with management, teaching staff, which included a representative from Pearson, and students.

2.92 The Standards Verifier follows up and signs off actions from the previous year at the following year's visit. All recommendations identified in the 2014 and 2015 reports have been fully addressed by the College and signed off by the Standards Verifier. The single recommendation of the 2016 report requests that teaching staff ensure that students complete the learner feedback section of their assessments to allow for further enhancement of the learner voice in order to enable continuous development. There are no essential recommendations.

2.93 Student representatives are members of the Academic and Course Boards and are able to contribute to the discussions and the development of action plans. Following consideration of a Standards Verifier or Academic Management Review report at the Course Management meeting, action points are consolidated into a dedicated action plan, with implementation monitored by the Course Board and Academic Board. Tracking of recommendations from Standards Verifier and Annual Management Review reports by the Course Management meeting occurs within the dedicated action plans. In most cases the actions relate to teaching and learning and are devolved for action, through the Director of Studies, to the Unit Leaders, with the Academic Board monitoring compliance.

2.94 The review team concludes that Expectation B7 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College makes scrupulous use of its external examiner. Reflection at both programme and College level on the content of external examiner reports, coupled with the resulting action planning, ensures that reports are effectively considered and acted upon.

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

2.95 The awarding organisation, Pearson, undertakes an annual Academic Management Review (AMR) process to monitor academic standards and the quality of learning. The College has undergone three AMRs, and any recommendations have led to action plans which are subject to monitoring through the committee structure. Annual visits from Pearson ensure that recommendations from the previous year have been addressed, signed off and reported upon in the AMR. Pearson is responsible for the periodic review of its programmes. This has resulted in a revised programme specification for the HND in Business which the College is implementing from September 2016.

2.96 The College has an Annual Course Monitoring policy. The College produces an internal detailed and analytical ACQMR, resulting in a composite action plan which draws upon both qualitative and quantitative information. This process ensures that the reports are detailed and meaningful in their oversight and analysis. For example, Assessment Boards make accurate and informed decisions based on the detailed statistical analyses it receives about student attendance monitoring and student achievement data which then informs the ACQMR.

2.97 In preparing the report, evidence is drawn from a wide range of reference points including key issues from action plans, the Pearson Standards Verifier reports, student feedback surveys, minutes of the deliberative structure, Assessment Board minutes and any areas of good practice. However, there is currently no engagement with external agencies which would add to the value of the process to provide a wider evidence base, although the College is considering the development of an action plan to provide more focus on employer engagement.

2.98 Although it is not a Pearson requirement, the ACQM reports are made available to the appointed Standards Verifier, to confirm that the College regularly monitors and has oversight of the quality of its higher education provision. The ongoing monitoring of the programme is the responsibility of the Academic Board, which meets three times per year and Course Management meetings. Senior staff, Cohort Leaders and the Examination Officer attend the Course Management meetings. Student representatives attend meetings of the Academic Board at which the ACQM report is considered. The College annually amends its Annual Course Quality Monitoring Policy and template to ensure currency. For instance, it has developed and improved the way in which it presents statistical data and summary reports and has invested in a more robust data management system.

2.99 The College gathers information from students through virtual, personal and written approaches, and disseminates information about its responses to student requests through the same channels, including responses to the Students' Complaints Log.

2.100 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B8 to be met in principle.

2.101 The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's arrangements for programme monitoring and review by examining relevant documentation, including the College's quality cycle, procedural documents, annual monitoring reports, Academic Board

and Course Management minutes of meetings, responses to annual monitoring reports and unit evaluation surveys. The review also gathered evidence from meetings with students, support staff, academic and senior staff.

2.102 Staff and students are aware of the responsibilities for annual monitoring and that they are clear and effective with actions being taken to address issues raised. For example, the College has taken action to improve progression and achievement rates (see Expectation B4). It closely monitors rates of retention, progression and achievement as part of annual monitoring. In an attempt to improve retention, progression and achievement the College has changed its admissions requirements, increased student support, strengthened attendance monitoring, with some students being deregistered due to poor attendance.

2.103 The College is using improved levels of analysis in its Annual Course Monitoring, which has led to improvements to the student pass and achievement rates and that actions related to annual monitoring are effectively implemented and understood by teaching and support staff. There is an explicit link between programme-led ACQM reports and Pearson's consideration of its AMRs. Staff are aware and understand the annual monitoring and review processes.

2.104 Actions taken from 2016 Standards Verifier reports have been effectively addressed, such as providing students with more specific feedback in respect of assignments and improving tutors' understanding of merit grade descriptors.

2.105 Student views provided through Unit Leader reports and a range of surveys on the ACQMR are considered at formal committee and have directly led to improvements in the quality of learning opportunities.

2.106 The College has articulated several action plans to support policies such as for the Teaching and Learning Strategy, and the Learning Resources Strategy. However, the format of the action plans are inconsistent, with some lacking appropriate timescales and key performance indicators to measure their effectiveness, The review team **recommends** that, by April 2017, the College ensures a consistent approach to the development and implementation of action plans that have clear measurable targets and outcomes within an explicit timeframe to enable progress to be systematically measured in respect of student learning opportunities.

2.107 The review team concludes that Expectation B8 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College is managing its responsibilities for monitoring and reviewing the programmes delivered on behalf of its awarding organisation and there is effective institutional consideration of the Annual Monitoring Reports.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.108 The College has a formal complaints policy which outlines the process for resolving a complaint informally, formally and the process for appealing a decision. The policy outlines how a complaint will be investigated, including timescales and explains that students can appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) should they be unhappy with the outcome of the College's internal processes.

2.109 The College has produced a complaints flowchart and complaints guidance for both students and staff to assist them in understanding the complaints process. Students are made aware of the complaints procedure at their induction and it is available publicly on the College's website and internally on the College's VLE. The student handbook directs students to the VLE to access information regarding the complaints procedure. Should a student make a complaint to Pearson this would be referred back to the College. There have been no formal complaints to the College.

2.110 Complaints informally raised through the Student Representative Committee are added to the Students Complaints Log and are subsequently discussed at Academic Board. All formal complaints at the College are dealt with by the College's Operations Manager who liaises, and where necessary, appoints an investigating officer.

2.111 The College has an Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures which outlines the process for making and responding to an academic appeal. The procedure has four stages including an informal initial stage of conciliation. Where conciliation is unsuccessful, students can appeal formally to the College Vice-Principal, the third stage involves the appeal being heard by an academic panel. Should there be no resolution by the College, the student may appeal through independent adjudication by the OIA. Students can access the Academic Appeals Policy via the VLE and the policy is publicly available on the College's website.

2.112 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation B9 to be met in principle.

2.113 The review team considered the policies and procedures relating to both student complaints and academic appeals, minutes of the Student Representative Committee, the Student Complaints Log, the self-evaluation document and the written student submission. The review team also met staff and students. The review team was not able to test the robustness of the College's policies and procedures in relation to student complaints and academic appeals as no formal complaints or appeals have been made to the College.

2.114 Students are aware of the processes for making a formal complaint or an academic appeal. Students highlight that staff often dealt with complaints quickly and informally and that they have a variety of means to contact staff if they require a timely response.

2.115 The College uses the Student Representative Committee to capture informal complaints in the Student Complaints Log. The Students' Complaints Log is updated by the Student Welfare Officer and is discussed at Academic Board. Students can access the most up-to-date version of the Student Complaints Log by the 'You Said, We Did' section of the VLE.

2.116 Staff are aware of the procedures for a student complaint or appeal and are able to advise students accordingly although no formal complaints or appeals have been submitted. Both staff and students cited the supportive relationship between staff and students and the open door policy of academic, senior and support staff which has enabled the resolution of issues by informal means.

2.117 The review team concludes that Expectation B9 is met. The associated risk is low as the College has clear policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints and appeals.

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

2.118 This section is not applicable as the College does not have arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others.

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

2.119 This section is not applicable as the College does not offer research degree programmes.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.121 All applicable Expectations have been met and the risk is judged low except for one which is moderate. Four recommendations are made covering five Expectations.

2.122 The recommendations arising from the Expectations indicate the College should ensure that equality and diversity principles are embedded within College policies for staff and students; ensure a consistent approach to the development and implementation of action plans that have clear measurable targets and outcomes within an explicit timeframe to enable progress to be systematically measured in respect of student learning opportunities; that the pastoral care for students be further developed and to further develop the student representative system by providing formal training to enable students to more effectively fulfil their role.

2.123 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The College has an Information about Higher Education Policy and Procedure relating to the creation and publication of material. The College produces a variety of information relating to learning opportunities and publicises this through a number of means including the College website, the internal VLE for staff and students, printed materials and through social media platforms. The College uses social media to communicate to current and prospective students and has a Social Media Policy which outlines guidelines and a number of 'Dos and Don'ts' for College staff and students.

3.2 All information relating to the College is formally signed off by the Academic Principal prior to it being published.

3.3 All students, once enrolled at the College, are given a College email account which enables them to gain access to the VLE. This acts as a repository for key course and College-related information and contains information such as unit guides, course guides, reading material and the student handbook.

3.4 The College produces a prospectus for prospective students which includes Pearson's logos and the College's entry requirements. The College clearly articulates responsibilities for the provision of information through its information procedure and associated information's approval process. All information for approval requires a covering approval form which includes an outline of the material, the intended audience and the means of communication and the College uses its committee structure to enable consideration of accuracy, accessibility and trustworthiness of its information.

3.5 The policies and procedures of the College would allow Expectation C to be met in principle.

3.6 The review team considered a range of evidence including the programme materials and publicly available information via the College website. The review team also held a number of meetings with students and staff and held a meeting to specifically explore the contents of the VLE and reviewed the College's processes and procedures for approving and signing off information.

3.7 The College is currently advertising the HND Business programme and the Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership although it currently only has students enrolled on the HND Business programme.

3.8 The College makes available information relating to College committees including Academic Board, Course Board and the Student Representative Committee to students and staff via the VLE. This is easy to navigate and a range of information is readily available.

3.9 Prior to applying, students are able to access information about the College through the College website and from staff in the admissions office. Students confirm that they

received information about their pathways options prior to starting at the College and spoke positively of the information provided during the student induction.

3.10 The primary means of students for accessing information is through the VLE, which includes information relating to their course and the support services available. Students can access and use available journals effectively through their College email account. Staff are able to articulate the process for approving and signing off information and are aware of the information policy used by the College.

3.11 The College has a set of minimum standards for the VLE and staff are clear on what these are and of their own responsibilities. Each unit has a dedicated page on the VLE and tutors regularly update information to provide students with relevant content for their programmes.

3.12 The review team concludes that Expectation C is met. The associated risk is low because the College has policies and procedures which ensure that public information is fit for purpose, up to date and accurate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.14 The Expectation is met and the risk is low.

3.15 The review team concludes that the quality of the College's information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

4.1 The College states that it 'takes a strategic approach to quality enhancement and the continuous improvement of the quality of students' learning experiences throughout the whole student journey from admissions through to achievement of their qualification and fulfilment of future learning aspirations'.

4.2 The College's Strategic Plan sets out six strategic objectives which are encapsulated in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and Learning Resources Strategy. The College states that progress is monitored against the strategic objectives in the accompanying action plans which are aligned to these strategic documents and include feedback from students, through survey results and the Student Representative Committee.

4.3 Externality in this process is usefully informed by the Quality Code, previous Quality Assurance reports, and Pearson's reports, which culminates in AMRs and Standards Verifier reports. There is no contribution from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies or employers, which could have the potential to enhance the provision.

4.4 In response to recommendations from previous external reviews, including those from Pearson and QAA, the College has produced action plans which enable it to address any required improvements, such as low progression and achievement rates, and the requirement for less generic assessment feedback to students.

4.5 Actions taken to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities, are effectively monitored within the College's ACQM reports, and include strategic initiatives such as the introduction of a consolidated student record system and rigorous procedures for monitoring students' attendance.

4.6 The College's committee structure, which forms part of the underpinning quality assurance framework, has clear terms of reference for its committees and deliberative structures and the majority include the identification of good practice and areas for enhancement, for example the dissemination of good practice related to lesson observation.

4.7 The College policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

4.8 The review team considered the effectiveness of the College's approach by reviewing a variety of documentation, including data, strategic planning documents, annual monitoring reports, the Quality Manual, staffing structures, committee terms of reference and minutes, and a variety of action plans related to teaching and learning. The review team raised questions in meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, and students, and additionally through a structured demonstration of the VLE, with a focus on how the various enhancement initiatives were organised, planned and monitored in a systematic way.

4.9 Although the College does not have a formal enhancement strategy, the review team was able to identify the College's approach to enhancement and strategic oversight through the meetings with staff and students. There is an effective quality assurance system

supported by an underpinning academic framework, a coherent range of policy and procedural documentation and a well-functioning committee structure, which considers among other things annual monitoring reports. There is a productive relationship with the awarding organisation, Pearson and the College uses this relationship to support learning and teaching.

4.10 The College has made good progress in engaging explicitly with the Quality Code. Work has been focused on mapping College policies and the quality assurance manual against the Quality Code and the requirements of Pearson. The College clearly aligns its teaching and learning activities to the Quality Code and promotes the pursuit of enhancement activities to staff.

4.11 Staff demonstrated an understanding of the processes in respect of the awarding organisation and their responsibilities and were clear about the processes undertaken to improve the quality of learning opportunities in respect of enhancement. Teaching staff are familiar with the precepts of the Quality Code.

4.12 The College's processes for annual monitoring are widely understood by teaching and support staff who confirmed their understanding about how, where and when actions arising from annual monitoring review processes are addressed or completed and how they result in systematic continuous improvement.

4.13 The College states in its Strategic Plan that one of the College's core values is 'valuing opportunity, diversity and inclusiveness'. It was not clear to the review team how this aim is referenced or reviewed in any targeted goal-setting process, and although the College has produced a Policy of Equal Opportunity for Staff and Students, the document is not aligned with any explicit action plan which would enable the College to measure its operational effectiveness and progress, nor are the principles of equality and diversity embedded in College policies. This has led to a recommendation in Expectation B4. This is also the case with the College's Learning Support Policy for Students which comprises a narrative document that is not aligned to any specific measurable outcomes.

4.14 The College has produced a Teaching, Learning and Enhancement strategy which is supported by an action plan. The action plan does not contain explicit targets regarding timeframes for completion of actions. Similarly, the College has developed a Learning Resources Strategy action plan which supports its Learning Resources Strategy. The plan identifies planned action, but it is not clear how this action will be operationalised or attained. Though useful, the action plans do not contain key performance indicators by which progress can be measured or impact reported upon, so that progress can be clearly defined and evidenced year on year. This has led to a recommendation in Expectation B8.

4.15 Quality assurance processes are intended to be used to inform enhancement initiatives, principally through the annual monitoring processes. These processes provide a foundation for enhancement initiatives which, if systematically planned, evaluated and disseminated to all College staff, would usefully inform the College's overall approach to enhancement, as opposed to compliance and the standard operational activities for improvement.

4.16 Action plans arising from Standards Verifiers reports, Pearson's AMR reports and the College's ACQM report are regularly updated and progress monitored; actions which are not completed are carried forward and dealt with appropriately.

4.17 The College has acknowledged the need to improve student retention and achievement, and the consideration of student progression data is a key feature of the College and programme monitoring and review reporting structures. The College has recently established a Retention, Achievement and Completion Task Group which has

responsibility for monitoring the progress of both current students and legacy students. The Group reports directly to the Course Management meeting. The work undertaken by the Group and its consideration and scrutiny of individualised student data is a good example of a strategic initiative taken forward and implemented to improve student retention, achievement and completion. Positive action has been taken in relation to student progression data.

4.18 The College invests time and effort into improving the student experience in several areas, such as introducing flexible timetables and further development of the VLE as a learning and teaching tool and there are increased opportunities for extended learning through the delivery of optional additional study skills sessions within an extended 42-week delivery model.

4.19 Students confirm that they are able to contribute to the enhancement of their learning opportunities and their feedback is taken seriously and acted upon, for example, by the provision of a quiet study area within the library and improved access to the anti-plagiarism software tool. Students are satisfied with the quality of teaching and that they are helped to develop employability skills. The College provides a substantial number of examples of enhancement activities which are also articulated in its self-evaluation document. These include initiatives which are a result of addressing actions from external quality reviews, as well as initiatives explicitly developed from the College's own internal quality assurance systems and procedures, which result in actions that positively impact on the quality of the student experience.

4.20 The review team concludes that the Expectation in respect of Enhancement is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College is taking deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.21 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.

4.22 The Expectation in this area is met.

4.23 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **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 22-25 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* (FHEQIS).

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 organisation. 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.

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