



Sotheby's Institute of Art

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

March 2012

Key findings about Sotheby's Institute of Art

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

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

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

Good practice

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

- the effective use of appropriate external reference points to assure academic standards (paragraph 1.5)
- the Institute provides students with comprehensive, effective careers support leading to high employment rates (paragraph 2.2)
- effective procedures ensure that the virtual learning environment provides students with current, extensive and valuable information (paragraphs 2.10, 3.4)
- the extensive and well designed Welcome Website provides students with comprehensive, valuable and up-to-date information prior to enrolment (paragraph 3.1).

Recommendations

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

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

- work with the University of Manchester to fully implement the proposed staff development programme (paragraph 2.8).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Sotheby's Institute of Art (the provider; the Institute). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the University of Manchester. The review was carried out by Dr Gillian Blunden, Mr Steve Finch, Mr David Jones (reviewers) and Dr Peter Steer (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding body, meetings with staff, including an awarding body representative, and students.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

Sotheby's Institute of Art (the Institute) is a not-for-profit organisation founded by Sotheby's auction house in 1969 as an in-house training scheme. Since 2005, it has been owned by the Cambridge Information Group based in the USA. The Institute offers a wide range of accredited programmes up to a doctoral level. It is a single-campus institution and is situated in Bedford Square, London, in the heart of Bloomsbury and close to a number of major art galleries, museums and cultural organisations. In 1995, the University of Manchester became the Institute's validation partner. From the academic year 2010-11, all semester and summer programmes have awarded academic credit. The Institute's mission is to be 'universally acknowledged as the premier provider of advanced object-based art education, whose graduates combine passion for the visual arts with scholarship and market sophistication in order to flourish as leaders in the international art world.'

There are seven programme areas, each with a director who reports to the Institute's Director. These areas reflect exactly the programmes offered: Art Business, Contemporary Art, Contemporary Design, East Asian Art, Fine and Decorative Art, Photography, semester and summer programmes. The Academic Director has a key role in overseeing and coordinating the provision. In 2011-12, the enrolment is 171 postgraduate students and 140 semester students, representing 241 full-time equivalents. The majority of students study full-time.

At the time of the review, the Institute offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body:

The University of Manchester

- Postgraduate Diploma/MA Fine and Decorative Art
- Postgraduate Diploma/MA Contemporary Art
- Postgraduate Diploma/MA Art Business
- Postgraduate Diploma/MA Photography

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

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

- Postgraduate Diploma/MA East Asian Art
- Postgraduate Diploma/MA Contemporary Design
- Doctorates (split site with supervision shared between the Institute and the University)

Semester Courses (awarding Continuous Professional Development credits):

September-December 2011:

- Art and Business
- Foundations in Western Art

January-May 2012:

- Foundations in Western Art
- Art and Business
- Decorative Art and Design
- Arts of Asia and their Markets

Summer Study Courses (awarding Continuous Professional Development credits):

- Art and Its Markets
- Arts of Asia
- Contemporary Art in London
- European Decorative Arts: From Baroque to Art Nouveau
- Interiors and Design: From Art Nouveau to the New Millennium
- Michelangelo to Matisse: European Art, 1500-1900

The provider's stated responsibilities

The University of Manchester oversees its awards in a number of ways, including undertaking five-yearly reviews, and by the appointment of the Academic Advisor, who works closely with the Institute, and the external examiners. The development of assessments, their marking and the provision of feedback on the work is the responsibility of the Institute, as is the availability of suitable resources to support student learning and the provision of public information. The University checks the information available to students. Doctorates run by the University involve supervision from both the University and the Institute.

Recent developments

Postgraduate student enrolments have fluctuated slightly between 171 and 216 over the last few years with a slight overall decline in numbers. Semester and summer course enrolments have varied over a range of 121 to 145 and 113 to 155 respectively, with a slight overall increase in numbers. Student demography has also shifted, with an overall decline in students from the USA and an increase in numbers of students from around the world, particularly students from European countries. In 2011, the Institute was awarded Arts and Humanities Research Council funding for three years to support ten master's studentships, making it the only visual arts institute in the UK to have received such an award for professional preparation master's degrees. Over the last two years, there has been a shift in academic policy so that core teaching is provided by full-time and fractional academic staff

across the master's programmes, with the continued use of consultant lecturers to provide additional areas of expertise.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the Institute were invited to present a submission to the review team, but they did not do so. The coordinator met students at the preparatory meeting. The team met students during the review. Student views were very helpful to the team's understanding of the provision, for instance, concerning the academic and pastoral support that the Institute provides for them.

Detailed findings about Sotheby's Institute of Art

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The responsibilities of the Institute for the management of academic standards are clearly identified in its partnership agreement with the University of Manchester. The Institute has the responsibility for all aspects of academic delivery. The Institute's Quality Assurance Handbook provides an overview of the processes and procedures required to fulfil its obligations. The University has responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of the quality of its awards.

1.2 The Institute has a clear organisational structure and appropriate managerial responsibilities that provide a proper basis for the management of academic standards. The Director chairs the meetings of the Management Team which comprises senior managers, including financial and marketing representatives, as well as the Academic Director and the Director of Semester and Summer Study. She also chairs regular meetings of all the programme directors with the Academic Director and the Director of Semester and Summer Study. The introduction of these meetings has led to greater consistency in the academic management of the programmes.

1.3 The reporting arrangements for the management of academic standards are effective. The Academic Board, chaired by the Academic Director, with representatives of the student body, has overall responsibility for academic policy. The Academic Standards Committee, which meets monthly, is a forum open to all academic staff, chaired by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer and coordinated by the Registrar. It formulates proposals for the Academic Board and provides opportunities for the sharing of effective practice. At the course level, the staff/student consultative and programme committees meet twice a year and inform the Academic Standards Committee and the Academic Board as well as the university processes, including annual monitoring. They include representatives of the Academic Quality Team and representatives from the library and information technology departments, providing a link between academic staff and other key managers.

1.4 The Institute has a rigorous academic quality cycle. It produces an annual quality monitoring report for the University for each of its postgraduate degrees and one covering all the summer and semester programmes. These reports incorporate an action plan and provide an update on progress on previous action points. There is also an overall report to the University covering all of the Institute's programmes. The University's Academic Panel reviews these reports and action plans helped by the Academic Adviser who visits the Institute annually. The University undertakes a review of the Institute and its programmes every five years.

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

1.5 The Institute makes proper use of external reference points relevant to academic standards. It is helped by the use of the University of Manchester policies and procedures that are guided by the Academic Infrastructure. Each programme has a comprehensive programme specification reflecting the guidance in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). Academic delivery is consistent with advice in the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*) relevant to academic standards.

There are no subject benchmark statements specifically for the kind of object-based art education provided by the Institute. However, the Institute's reference to other comparable master's level programmes delivered by UK universities in developing its curricula represents a valuable use of external reference points. A major strength of the Institute is its very strong vocational and professional focus, with an emphasis on the business-related aspects of art education. Strong relationships with professionals in the art market provide additional points of reference in developing the content of the Institute's programmes. The Institute staff employed, or recently employed, in universities also provide valuable input and their experience provides additional useful points of reference. The Institute makes effective use of appropriate external reference points to assure academic standards. This is good practice.

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

1.6 The provision makes effective use of external examiners who are appointed by the University of Manchester. The external examiners attend the examination boards, ensuring that the correct academic procedures and processes are followed. They are very supportive of the Institute's provision. Where they have made suggestions, the Institute has responded effectively. For example, comments about the need for greater consistency in feedback to students have resulted in the introduction of a standard feedback form that has been helpful.

1.7 Moderation procedures are effective. The Institute sets all assessments, with oversight by the University of Manchester, and has the responsibility for moderation of work. It adheres closely to the University's regulations on assessment. For example, all dissertations are anonymously blind second-marked. For other assessed work, there is second marking based on scripts at the top, middle and bottom of the grade profile. External examiners indicate that the standards resulting from these processes are appropriate. However, these moderation protocols are not yet explicitly stated in the Quality Assurance Handbook.

1.8 The Institute has an effective system for the evaluation of its own management structures in relation to moderation and the involvement of external examiners. The managerial responsibilities and the committees involved in this evaluation are discussed in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4. Examples of issues considered include: using the full range of marks, the subject focus of assessment criteria, and the logistics of effective assessment on larger programmes. Feedback from students, including the questionnaires and comments from the staff/student consultative and programme committees, provides valuable input into these evaluations.

1.9 The Institute has developed suitable processes for the sharing of good practice. Since the appointment of the present Director, there has been additional emphasis on developing common academic processes and procedures across all programmes. The staff/student consultative and programme committees, the Academic Standards Committee, the Academic Board and input from the Academic Advisor promote the exchange of practice and provide opportunities to formulate policy. In addition, once a semester a mandatory staff meeting is held. There are regular lunchtime meetings to keep colleagues abreast of academic developments and share effective practice. Recently, there has been a greater sharing of core delivery material and cross-programme teaching. The annual faculty retreat offers an opportunity for the sharing of research findings and the sharing of effective practice.

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

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The Institute has effective procedures for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. It is responsible for the provision of all resources and for student support. The management structures and committees discussed in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 and 1.9 are also relevant to the oversight of the quality of learning opportunities. Annual reports play an important role in identifying resource requirements. Programme directors have a delegated budget for resources relevant to their programmes. The Director and the Director of Resources, and the Financial Controller, in consultation with key colleagues as appropriate, prioritise spending on larger projects. Feedback from students informs resource decisions. For example, changes in the admissions process are partly the result of student feedback.

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

2.2 The policies of the Institute align with the relevant precepts of the *Code of practice* for the management and enhancement of learning opportunities. The Institute has not undertaken an explicit mapping exercise of its policies with the *Code of practice* and the latest periodic review by the University makes little mention of the Academic Infrastructure. However, the team's consideration of the Institute's policies shows they reflect the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. For example, appeals and complaints procedures are detailed and are consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters*. They are articulated clearly to staff in the Quality Assurance Handbook and students in their handbooks. The Institute's support for disabled students fully reflects the guidance in the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students*, with the Institute able to give examples of effective adjustment to practice for disability. Careers support is comprehensive and effective, and aligns fully with the *Code of practice, Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance*. The careers department provides extensive guidance and help with gaining internships which provide valuable experience of the art market. Of the latest group of graduates, 26 per cent gained employment through undertaking internships. It also provides students with valuable guidance on the jobs market, links with the Institute's graduates, and organises useful networking opportunities with potential employers. The students met by the team value highly the support provided by the Institute, including the opportunities for specialised guidance on an individual basis. Employment rates for graduating students are high. The Institute provides students with comprehensive, effective careers support leading to high employment rates. This is good practice.

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

2.3 The Institute has a number of effective mechanisms for providing an oversight of learning and teaching. Minutes of the staff/student consultative and programme committees indicate that the students have an effective voice in the management of their learning. Staff

use the programme and module questionnaires to evaluate the student learning experience. The students met by the team confirmed the high quality of teaching. Learning methods are varied, including overseas trips on some programmes, extensive use of London museum collections and involvement with institutions in the commercial art market. The Institute's policy on the peer observation of teaching has encouraged its widespread use across the teaching staff. The programme annual monitoring reports require comment on the outcomes of these teaching observations. Peer observation is a compulsory element for all lecturers during probation.

2.4 The programme annual monitoring reports provide an effective tool for oversight of feedback to students. They are an effective means of capturing staff and student views, and tracking actions. The students met by the team find the written and verbal feedback they receive helpful in preparing for their future assessments.

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

2.5 The Institute has suitable mechanisms to evaluate student support. The Institute's overall annual report to the University of Manchester, covering all its programmes, evaluates student support and its development. It covers admissions and induction, the use of academic advisers and the personal tutor system, peer support, personal development planning and the integration of students with the academic and research community. The overall annual report provides an accurate account of the comments made in the programme annual reports. Along with individual programme reports, it is considered in a detailed manner at the University's Academic Panel.

2.6 The students met by the team are generally very satisfied with the support that they receive from the Institute. They receive extensive academic and pastoral support throughout their studies, for example the helpful orientation information at induction. The Institute uses students' views to evaluate and modify its activities. For example, some students voiced concerns about the efficiency of the admissions process in terms of timeliness. The Institute staff, including the Director, have listened to student representations and have now put in place a number of corrective and enhancement measures to improve the service. It is not possible to fully evaluate the impact until another cycle of admissions has been completed. Students recognise that because of the nature of programmes like MA Art Business, they may benefit from some additional knowledge in either the art or business areas. They are offered the opportunity to enrol for introductory units provided solely online by Sotheby's Institute of Art, New York. Students on internship have access to the same support mechanisms as the rest of the students.

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

2.7 The Institute has mechanisms that ensure there is appropriate staff expertise to deliver its programmes. It has a comprehensive recruitment and selection policy. The present recruitment policy for academic staff is to reduce the consultant staff with an increase in full-time and fractional appointments. All academic staff must be approved by the University of Manchester. Recently, the Institute has reviewed its staff induction process to enhance its effectiveness. For example, there is now compulsory observation of teaching and mentoring for new lecturers. Programme directors are responsible for carrying out appraisals for those teaching on their courses. The annual appraisal process monitors and evaluates staff performance. The process results in action plans identifying staff development opportunities. Analysis by the Institute concluded there was a need for additional staff development on academic management and leadership for programme directors and this is now in place.

2.8 Strategic planning for staff development is in place and is being implemented. The new draft strategic plan puts a strong emphasis on supporting staff, both financially and intellectually, to carry out high quality research. A new draft policy has been written in December 2011 to provide further guidance on staff development generally. Present levels of subject-specific staff development provide suitable underpinning for programme delivery. Academic output reflects the Institute's commitment to object-based learning and the inclusion in all programmes of business-related experience. It includes contributions to academic journals as well as books, exhibitions and restoration work. The self-evaluation indicates that the University has agreed to provide a number of staff development sessions. So far two have been held on plagiarism and dissertation supervision. Staff indicated that as part of the partnership agreement with the University a more extensive programme is envisaged, although this has not yet occurred. The sessions are planned to provide generic staff development on several areas, for example pedagogy and assessment. It is desirable for the Institute to work with its awarding body to fully implement the proposed staff development programme.

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

2.9 The Institute provides sufficient resources to properly support learning. It uses the procedures, analysed in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 and 2.1 to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its provision of resources and to initiate improvements. Student views, specifically on the library and information technology provision, are surveyed annually by the relevant departments, as well as featuring in student feedback through the staff/student consultative and programme committees. The students met by the team indicated that library services were satisfactory. The policy is to make available all essential texts, although students find difficulty in obtaining some other texts on the reading lists. The Institute has invested in a number of online resources to help make access to information easier for students. Students make extensive use of specialist resources in public collections. The Institute has purchased access to a local university library for its students taking the East Asian Art programmes. The Institute is building up a collection of ceramic fragments and has a collection of art objects available for teaching purposes.

2.10 The virtual learning environment is a valuable resource for students on all programmes. Positive student comment has encouraged its development, increasing the students' opportunities for flexible learning. The students met by the team reported that the virtual learning environment was easy to use, was kept up to date and relevant and had made accessing subject-specific and programme information, like timetables, much easier. On programmes sampled by the team, the virtual learning environment includes extensive and valuable subject-specific learning material. Using proprietary software, the Institute has recently begun to analyse the use of the virtual learning environment more intensively to help with its future development.

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

3 Public information

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

3.1 The Institute, in collaboration with the Sotheby's Institute of Art in New York and the University of Manchester, produces comprehensive and accurate information that fully reflects its responsibilities under its partnership agreement. It provides information in a variety of formats, including a brochure, an extensive and well designed website, programme handbooks and module materials, its virtual learning environment and the use of social media. Admissions procedures are clearly documented in the marketing materials and on the website. The website is well organised and allows potential students easy access to details relating to the Institute, including entry requirements and procedures. It is updated regularly. The students met by the team found all their pre-enrolment information clear, easily available and valuable. They are able to prepare suitably for their studies. For example, after acceptance on a programme and payment of a deposit, the Welcome Website provides students with pre-enrolment information on a wide variety of aspects of the student experience, including visa requirements, detailed information on living in London and its cost, and the help available for securing accommodation. The Welcome Website is regularly updated, providing students with the latest information. The extensive and well designed Welcome Website provides students with comprehensive, valuable and up-to-date information prior to enrolment. This is good practice.

3.2 The Institute provides helpful academic information to all its students in the Postgraduate Handbook supported by programme-specific handbooks and module materials. The handbooks are available in electronic format on the virtual learning environment. They contain essential information, including timetables, programme calendars and the appeals process. Following consultation with the students, the programme specifications are not included in the handbooks, although they are on the virtual learning environment.

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

3.3 Clear and effective procedures are in place to ensure the accuracy and completeness of publicity materials and programme handbooks. All public documents and the content of the Institute's website go through regular and rigorous quality monitoring which results in accurate information for students. Strict guidelines ensure that the content of publicity materials cannot be changed without the approval of the marketing team. The Institute's brochure is updated annually, with the form and content being approved by the Sotheby's Institute of Art's New York office. Programme directors check the course details for the brochure and the website, with additional checks by the University of Manchester and the Institute's London Director. Prior to the start of each academic year, the programme directors revisit the handbooks, ensuring that all information provided is accurate, up to date and relevant. The University of Manchester provides guidance on the minimum content in programme handbooks, which the Institute follows closely. Along with the Postgraduate Handbook, this ensures that students get information on important aspects of programme delivery, for example on the avoidance of plagiarism. The Institute uses feedback from students extensively to refine the information it provides and ensure its accuracy. Students reported that the information they received from their initial enquiry onwards was accurate and comprehensive.

3.4 The virtual learning environment is a valuable source of information and undergoes regular and effective updating. It is an effective means of communicating up to date

information about the individual programmes and contacting individuals or groups of students. It is cleared of material at the start of each academic year, with the Registrar, information technology staff and the programme directors being jointly responsible for ensuring that the new content is accurate, comprehensive and current. The Institute allows only programme directors to adjust the course materials on the virtual learning environment. This ensures that information is not posted or taken down without the appropriate checks being completed. The Institute has effective procedures that ensure the virtual learning environment provides students with current, extensive and valuable information. This is good practice.

3.5 The use of social media is expanding and is closely controlled. The Institute has recently started to employ social media as a tool for engaging students, although official communication with students is still done through their Institute email account. The marketing and recruitment departments are the only bodies permitted to upload material onto the Institute's social media sites. The Institute is vigilant concerning the use of its name. It has recently taken action to close down an unofficial site using the Institute's name without permission.

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

Action plan³

Sotheby's Institute of Art action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight March 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective use of appropriate external reference points to assure academic standards (paragraph 1.5) 	Continuous cross-programme discussion at Programme Director meetings and more widely at Academic Standards Committee meetings to ensure the sharing and review of reference points in relation to current practice	Quarterly at Academic Boards	Academic Quality team and faculty	Arts and Humanities Research Council funding awarded in 2011 for Professional Practice Masters degrees, as an indicator of external recognition; external examiner reports give very positive feedback; Faculty participate in conferences, projects and publications on a continuous basis	Director, Academic Director University of Manchester	University of Manchester annual reviews; external examiner reports

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Institute provides students with comprehensive, effective careers support leading to higher employment rates (paragraph 2.2) 	<p>Continuous development and assessment in relation to student need and the <i>Code of practice</i> guidance</p>	<p>Annual review reports submitted early each year</p>	<p>Careers Director and Programme Directors</p>	<p>Annual statistics on employment compiled for annual review reports; informal feedback from alumni</p>	<p>Director; Director of Resources; Academic Board</p>	<p>Annual analysis of student and alumni surveys and employer feedback to continuously gauge student need and level of satisfaction with service</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective procedures ensure that the virtual learning environment provides students with current, extensive and valuable information (paragraphs 2.10, 3.4) 	<p>Continuous review and development of student need</p>	<p>Reviewed each semester and annually in June/July</p>	<p>Information Technology Systems specialist and Information Technology/Services Manager Admissions Registrar Programme teams</p>	<p>Information is current, extensive and valuable Procedures are updated appropriately</p>	<p>Information Technology/Services Manager, Director of Resources, Academic Director</p>	<p>Monitored via feedback in student staff consultative committees, University of Manchester annual monitoring, and the Information Technology/Library Services survey in May each year</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extensive and well designed Welcome Website provides students with comprehensive and up to date information prior to enrolment (paragraph 3.1). 	<p>Ongoing review and development according to student need</p>	<p>Reviewed annually in June/July</p>	<p>Admissions Manager, Information Technology/Services Manager</p>	<p>Positive student feedback</p>	<p>Director Marketing Director Academic Board</p>	<p>Feedback obtained from new students at the beginning of the academic year; in the student staff consultative committees, and at the Academic Board in early December</p>

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the University of Manchester to fully implement the proposed staff development programme (paragraph 2.8). 	Planning of x two days (equivalent) of training events and increased awareness among staff in relation to what university training is available	February 2013	Director of Resources, Validation Officer (University of Manchester) and Academic Adviser (University of Manchester)	<p>Two training events are planned on time and within budget and run successfully as measured through staff feedback and in discussion with the Academic Standard Committees and Academic Boards</p> <p>Staff members participate in training as per their contracts or identified through performance appraisals</p>	Director, Director of Resources, Academic Director	<p>Positive feedback from staff participation in development of training programme</p> <p>Staff discussion at Academic Standard Committees and Academic Boards regarding new pedagogies and methods of presentation</p> <p>Staff development records</p>

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook⁴](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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

RG 912 05/12

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 559 3

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786