



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Tottenham Hotspur Foundation

Partial review

October 2018

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About this review

This is a report of a Partial Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Tottenham Hotspur Foundation. The review took place on 12 October 2018 and was conducted by Dr Jenny Gilbert.

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

This was a partial review following an original review undertaken in November 2017, which resulted in a published report. The QAA review team made judgements on one area requiring improvement: the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

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

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

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

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

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review.

Key findings

Judgements

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

- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

No features of **good practice** were identified.

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes no **recommendations**.

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action already being taken to improve the educational provision offered to students:

- the steps being taken by the Foundation to embed its enhancement plan across the provision.

About the provider

The Tottenham Hotspur Foundation (the Foundation) is a registered charity since 2006 and has been delivering higher education in partnership with Middlesex University (the University) since 2011. The Foundation is the associated charity of Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and the delivery of higher education falls within the Education Department of the Foundation. The Foundation also delivers non-higher education programmes which focus on building community cohesion and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The Foundation is currently teaching out the final cohorts of the FdA Applied Sport and Community Development and FdSc Applied Football Coaching and Performance with 26 full-time students due to complete at the end of the academic year 2018-19. The courses are supported by three academic and three support staff who also support the Foundation's other education programmes.

Since the last QAA review, a new CEO has been appointed and the Foundation has relocated into a new building of a fully restored townhouse with modern facilities partially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Teaching of the higher education programmes takes place in both the new building and sports facilities owned by the football club.

The last QAA review took place in November 2017 and the judgement area of enhancement of learning opportunities resulted in a 'requires improvement' outcome. As a consequence, the Foundation was required to undergo a Partial Review within a year of the first review. The Foundation produced an action plan to address the recommendations made at the last review with the completion of several of the generated actions. The Foundation has developed a Closure Procedure, amended its Complaints Guidance Document and produced a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan. Several actions had not been formally completed, although there was evidence that changes had been made. The intended creation of a new committee to undertake the formal process for design, development and approval of programmes has not been followed up as the Foundation will cease delivery of higher education programmes in 2019.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

1.1 The Board of Trustees of the Foundation comprises three members who meet formally twice a year. The last QAA Higher Education Review report was shared with the Board members during informal meetings. The Board made a strategic decision to close the Foundation's higher education programmes in June 2017, with no further intake to the programmes after October 2017. This decision resulted from the Foundation's then-emerging direction of travel to place greater emphasis on supporting its local residents to get back into education, to train, or to secure and to sustain employment. While the current higher education programmes are running successfully, recruitment has fallen, and students are drawn predominantly from the wider London area.

1.2 During the first quarter 2018 an external consultant reviewed and reported on the Foundation's preparedness for its then emerging direction of travel. As a result of this review, a new Chief Executive Officer took up post in April 2018. In August 2018 a management team was established, led by the Chief Executive, to provide a forum where each of the Foundation's projects are considered by the whole team, and also ideas for potential new projects. The Head of Higher Education is a member of the management team and reports on issues arising within the higher education provision.

1.3 The revised higher education committee structure includes re-titling the Board of Studies as the Student Voice Committee. The University made the decision to change the title of this committee to the Student Voice Committee to make its purpose clearer to students. The Student Voice Committee at the Foundation includes an additional item within its remit: namely to address the QAA Action Plan, update it and make recommendations for compliance. The Student Voice Committee receives reports module by module on student attendance, content, visits, assessment and satisfaction. The Foundation has replaced the Higher Education Committee (AGM) with the Teaching Learning Committee/AGM; this new committee has a strategic remit and is scheduled to meet every 18 months. The new committee structure addresses issues raised in the last review and has student representatives on most committees within the framework.

1.4 The Foundation complies with the University's requirements for quality assurance of its programmes. The review team was informed that module leaders compile module reports that are submitted, on completion of a module, to the external examiner's drop-box. Although not specified in assessment board remits, external examiners may comment upon these reports in subject and programme assessment boards and they are required to comment upon module reports in their final external examiner's report. The Head of Higher Education employs module reports when completing the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the programmes. This report, which includes student evaluations and external examiner comments is passed to the University Link Tutor who provides a response. The AMR is discussed at the Foundation's Student Voice Committee following its progress through the University's quality assurance committees. This quality assurance process allows for the identification of opportunities for enhancement.

1.5 The arrangements in place for the oversight and identification of enhancement would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.6 The review team considered committee structure diagrams and minutes of committees. Discussion with Foundation staff, students and trustees covered the strategic direction of the Foundation; its quality assurance mechanisms; the newly written Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan and the Foundation's Action Plan.

1.7 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan, completed in August 2018 responded to the recommendation made in the last QAA review and will be approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2018. The Plan was drafted by Foundation staff and was circulated more widely to all higher education staff for comment and amendment prior to its finalisation. It has six goals: to provide robust assessment and feedback; to develop curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities; to apply Technology Enhanced Learning; to support students in becoming independent learners; to equip students as employable graduates and; to encourage student participation.

1.8 Progress against these goals was identified by tutors who offered detailed and enthusiastic descriptions of placement and coaching opportunities provided to students; of the extensive use of technology through the virtual learning environment, specialist software and devices used off-site; and of graduates returning to assist current students. Foundation staff articulated the unique selling points of the Foundation's programmes and the value of links with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and the community. Students confirmed that the goals of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan were being achieved. They commended the placement opportunities, the level of tutor and personal support and the academic support for study skills and referencing. The review team was informed that students progressing from the Foundation programmes to the third year of a related degree at the University are well prepared and achieve good outcomes.

1.9 Academic staff are well supported. Tutors from the Foundation attend Middlesex University's teaching and learning conferences and the University Link Tutor has regular meetings with the Head of Higher Education. Two tutors have enrolled on a distance-learning Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. Their study has prompted the development of an assessment feedback checklist contributing to the first goal in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan. Notwithstanding the impending closure of the programmes, tutors are introducing new initiatives to achieve the goals of the enhancement plan. Therefore, the review team **affirms** the steps being taken by the Foundation to embed its enhancement plan across the provision.

1.10 The Foundation has made improvements on its focus towards enhancement. Although the new committee structure requires clearer reporting lines and consistent naming of committees in Foundation documentation, there is clearer oversight of enhancement with the establishment of the Senior Management Group and the development of the Teaching and Enhancement Plan. Students are highly satisfied with their learning experiences and the opportunities offered to them by the Foundation. They feel listened to through the student representation system which is well understood and is fit for purpose.

1.11 The Foundation has taken deliberate steps to improve the quality of student learning opportunities through actions to the recommendations from the last review. This has resulted in a more focused committee structure and introduction of an enhancement plan. The approach could be more systematically strategic and more scrupulously documented but evidence of staff and student engagement with the plan alongside the deliberate development of initiatives has provided sufficient improvement. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met, and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

1.12 In determining its judgement on the enhancement of student learning opportunities, the review team considered the findings against the criteria as outlined in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.13 The review team considers that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

1.14 The Foundation has taken steps to provide a more strategic approach to enhancement with the development and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement plan, which has resulted in an affirmation as it is still not fully embedded. The Board of Trustees has oversight of significant issues related to the higher education provision but the oversight of enhancement is more appropriately placed with the Senior Management Group.

1.15 Academic staff are engaged in the process of reflecting upon teaching and enhancing students' learning opportunities and despite the impending closure of the programmes, they focus on achieving the goals of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan. The quality assurance processes required by the University are well understood by Foundation staff and enable the Foundation to identify opportunities for enhancement.

1.16 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the provider is **met**.

Glossary

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

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

Academic standards

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

Award

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

Awarding organisation

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

Blended learning

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

Credit(s)

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

Degree-awarding body

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

Distance learning

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

Dual award or double award

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

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of

provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations

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

Flexible and distributed learning

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

Framework

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

Framework for higher education qualifications

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

Good practice

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

Learning opportunities

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

Learning outcomes

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

Multiple awards

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

Operational definition

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

Programme (of study)

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

Programme specifications

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

Quality Code

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

Reference points

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

Self-evaluation document

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

Subject Benchmark Statement

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

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

Threshold academic standard

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

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

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

Widening participation

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

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