Higher Education Review (Plus) of UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

June 2015

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Plus) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at UCFB College of Football Business Ltd. The review took place from 23 to 25 June 2015 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Andrew Downton
- Ms Deborah Trayhurn
- Ms Cara Williams (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by UCFB College of Football Business Ltd 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 (Plus), 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
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

In Higher Education Review (Plus) there is also a check on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG). This check has 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 of their education provider.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in the section on page 5.

In reviewing UCFB College of Football Business Ltd, the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The themes for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Plus)[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the Glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review (Plus): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at UCFB College of Football Business Ltd.

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

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at UCFB College of Football Business Ltd.

- The extensive individualised support provided for students during the application, enrolment and induction process (Expectation B2).
- The comprehensive range of individually tailored and flexible support for students (Expectation B4).
- The extension of the use of high profile guest speakers to support the needs of an increasingly broad range of sports related programmes (Expectation B4).
- The collection of data to document, analyse and respond to informal complaints (Expectation B9).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to UCFB College of Football Business Ltd.

By December 2015:

- further develop, rationalise and update quality assurance and enhancement documentation to reflect the new structures for management and academic governance (Expectation A2.1)
- ensure that academic staff are appropriately skilled, supported and developed to design and deliver the College's planned and future academic programmes (Expectation A3.1)
- formalise and thoroughly record the internal deliberations concerning new programme development, and ensure effective academic scrutiny (Expectation B1)
- revise the remit of the senior Academic Quality Committee, ensure robust scrutiny, and effectively record the outcomes of annual programme review (Expectation B8)
- consolidate and embed a more systematic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities (Enhancement).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that UCFB College of Football Business Ltd is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The recent appointment of a new Head of School with specific responsibility for leading initiatives in learning and teaching, and academic development (Expectation B3).
- The approval and implementation of the draft internal policy for information and approval procedures (Expectation C).

Theme: Student Employability

All programmes delivered at the UCFB College of Football Business Ltd embed employability skills in the curriculum. Visiting professionals and guest speakers contribute valuable expertise, and this is being extended in response to the requirements of new programmes. Many staff have extensive and effective links with employers and the College encourages project work that is employment based. The complementary curriculum draws a wide range of high-profile professionals from relevant sports business contexts, and guest lectures and presentations enrich the students' experience. This offers a unique opportunity for students to begin to build the professional networks that will help them into employment, and is a key part of the College's distinctive character and ethos. The College is based at Wembley Stadium, London, and at Burnley Football Club, and is embedded within the professional football environment. These locations offer students an opportunity to engage learning with practice.

During their time at the College, students have the opportunity to undertake placements within the stadia, engage with staff, partners and customers, and gain insight into the operations behind matches and events and their global partnership network. Extracurricular work-related internship opportunities support employability and are highly valued by students. The College's complementary curriculum also offers formal careers advice sessions to support student employability. Each student's personal development plan is intended to support the understanding of skills and attributes useful for gaining employment.

Financial sustainability, management and governance

There were no material issues identified at UCFB College of Football Business Ltd during 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 (Plus).

About UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

UCFB College of Football Business Ltd (the College) is a limited company dedicated to the delivery of undergraduate degree programmes and executive education in the operational and business aspects of football business and sports industries. The College's vision is 'To be the world's leading neurological centre for football business education', with a mission 'To provide best-in-class graduates with football and business expertise'. Its aim is to develop students' administrative, management and operational skills and capabilities, and provide them with qualifications relevant to work in the football and sports industries.

The College is currently located at two delivery sites at Wembley Stadium, London, and at Burnley Football Club, Lancashire. Three original undergraduate programmes have been delivered at Burnley Football Club since 2011, with the first cohort of students graduating in summer 2014. In autumn 2014 the College expanded its provision and opened a second campus at Wembley Stadium, which offers a wider range of undergraduate programmes.

The College has 554 students enrolled. Of these, 200 students are in their first year of undergraduate study at Level 4 at the Wembley Stadium campus. The remaining 354 students are studying at Levels 4 to 6 at the Burnley Football Club campus. In addition to the three original programmes of study in football business, management, marketing and media, the College has expanded its discipline areas to include sports law, coaching, retail and merchandising, sports psychology, and event and stadium management. In total, the College currently offers nine programmes of study. Additionally, eight further undergraduate programmes and one master's level programme have been validated for delivery from September 2015.

The College currently works in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University (the University), which validates all programmes offered. In July 2014, the collaboration agreement with the University was changed to a franchised agreement to enable growth in student numbers. To maintain the academic standards and quality of higher education qualifications, the College has adopted the University's quality framework, and has adapted relevant policies and procedures to meet the College context where appropriate. The College is currently exploring the potential for developing further partnerships with other UK universities.

Key challenges facing the College are: embedding its relatively new deliberative structures and processes within the context of the rapid expansion of the range of provision (including master's level provision); increasing student numbers; the appointment of many new members of staff; and ensuring the replication of its mission, vision and ethos at the new Wembley campus. As a new provider of higher education, the College was subject to a QAA Higher Education Review Plus (HER) in 2014, with the current review determined by the significant expansion in student numbers, the acquisition of the new Wembley campus, and significant changes in staffing.

The College has made some progress against the actions following the recommendations in the HER 2014. However, the proximity of the previous review undertaken in April 2014 has allowed the College limited time to develop and establish many of the embryonic actions. Further work is needed to ensure that the quality assurance and enhancement processes are robustly undertaken and effectively embedded to provide strategic oversight. A number of the recommendations in this report require that further action be taken to support these developments.

Explanation of the findings about UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

Explanation of the findings about UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

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

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

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* 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   The College is responsible for proposing new programmes, supporting curriculum development, and for ensuring programmes are mapped to the appropriate level of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). The College also ensures that programmes meet professional body requirements where appropriate. Ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the programmes offered by the College lies with the awarding body, Buckinghamshire New University (the University). The University determines arrangements for the overall design, aims and learning outcomes of programmes, approving developments and assuring standards are met. These arrangements allow Expectation A1 to be met in theory.

1.2   The review team considered relevant College and University documentary evidence, including the Academic Collaborative Agreement, documentation for programme development and approval, quality assurance policies and procedures, validation reports, and external examiners' reports; and talked to link tutors, senior College staff and others involved in programme delivery.

1.3   Responsibilities are well understood within the College, which works effectively with the University to ensure compliance with delivery, assessment and award requirements.

The College is in the process of strengthening its academic staffing base. It has introduced a new formal process of internal design and approval of new programmes to meet the recommendation of the HER in 2014. The College process outlines internal development from the initial concept and discussion at its Advisory Board, followed by the proposal being considered at the University's Strategic Partnership Board. The Academic Quality Directorate works with the University's Partnerships Manager and link tutors to ensure that programmes are set at an appropriate level on the FHEQ, and that credit structures are appropriate.

1.4   Overall, the College is strengthening its practices to ensure it effectively discharges its responsibilities within the context of its agreement with its awarding body. Qualifications are allocated to the appropriate level of the FHEQ and therefore meet the requirement of Expectation A1. However, the programme development and review process that has been introduced, is not yet embedded within the College's committee structure. This matter is reflected in the recommendation made under Expectation 2.1. The academic development activity has been strengthened by recent recruitment of senior staff, whose role is to extend the support and guidance available, and to assist with programme design and the understanding of academic levels. Strong support and links with employer networks extend these processes. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

1.5   The College works with the University's regulations to assure academic standards for the validated programmes. The College operates within the requirements of the University's procedures to meet its regulations, which are extensive and clear. These processes are integrated in the College's Quality Assurance Manual. For the BSc (Hons) Sports Psychology, part of a franchised delivery partnership, the College works directly to the University's procedures.

1.6   The review team considered the Quality Assurance Manual, the HER action plan, link tutor and external examiners' reports, deliberative committee structures, and records of minutes of committee meetings. The team also met staff from the University and College, including senior management, teaching staff and students.

1.7   Responsibilities are understood, and meetings take place with the University to discuss strategy and operational matters several times during the year. The University has engaged with the College to review and sign off the College's action plan arising from the HER in 2014. A link tutor arrangement is in place for the validated programmes and visits are made three times a year. Two new external examiners are in the process of being appointed to report on the validated programmes, and their expertise mapped to programme requirements. Wembley programmes recruited their first cohorts in 2015 and at the time of the review visit no external examiners' reports had been received. The report for similar programmes delivered at the Burnley campus confirms assessment practices at Level 6 are sound.

1.8   As a response to the College's recent development of eight new programmes and the extensive development plan for 2015-16, the University is strengthening its Operations Board by the inclusion of more senior staff from its partner faculties. This development is intended to ensure full scrutiny of programme developments, and assure assessment operations at the College. The appointment of further link tutors is being considered to ensure discipline specialisms for the new programmes starting in autumn 2015. The College has recognised the responsibilities entailed in these developments and has introduced formal academic departments and disciplines, with the appointment of senior academics, including four heads of school. Deliberative committee practices were altered in spring 2015 to provide more strategic oversight and governance. The new heads of schools, and their deputies, are intended to become full members of these committees.

1.9   College structures and documents do not fully demonstrate current College practices, or the intended future plans and developing arrangements. Terms of reference for the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) are confused and do not clearly outline responsibilities for providing oversight of academic standards. Terminology describing the structures, roles and responsibilities in these documents are inconsistently applied. Minutes of meetings providing records of the internal stages of consideration of programme developments are sparse, and only minimal records of discussion and actions are routinely provided. The University continues to exercise a key role in managing oversight of provision. The review team **recommends** that, by December 2015, the College further develop, rationalise and update quality assurance and enhancement documentation to reflect the new structures for management and academic governance.

1.10   Overall, the review team concludes that Expectation A2.1 is met, as the College is working effectively with its awarding body to ensure that regulations and frameworks for awarding academic credit and qualifications are effective. However, it is not possible to see how the College's recently developed deliberative structures and processes are working effectively in action, to ensure oversight and management of provision. In light of this, and the extensive and planned expansion of programmes being undertaken at the College, the associated level of risk is judged to be moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

1.11   The College works closely with the University to fulfil its responsibility in providing a definitive record for all programmes. This includes information about programme aims, intended learning outcomes, structure and assessments. As noted during the previous HER, comprehensive module handbooks provide clear links between aims, learning outcomes and assessment, and are understood by students. Programme specifications are available to prospective students on its website, and current students can access these through the virtual learning environment (VLE) and handbooks. The College has in place appropriate mechanisms for Expectation A2.2 to be met.

1.12   The review team looked at various documents, including the programme specifications, programme and module handbooks, pro forma templates, the College website and VLE, and the collaborative partnership agreement; and met senior management, teaching staff and students.

1.13   Eight new programmes are proposed to start, subject to validation approval, in September 2015. Six of these will be delivered at Wembley and two at both the Burnley and Wembley campuses, as well as one master's programme. Newly appointed heads of school, and assistant heads of school, will have responsibility for oversight of the suitability of all programme proposals and quality assurance matters. The College has formal procedures for module or programme updating, involving a three-stage process of consultation, approval and reporting. As this is the first operational year of the delivery at the Wembley campus, this process is still in progress. Programme leaders will facilitate programme reviews at the year end to identify improvements and then make the necessary amendments for the following year.

1.14   There is a definitive document module pro forma, which is approved at validation, and may only be changed through formal University procedures. The University, as the primary external reference point, confirms that academic standards are upheld and that provision is aligned to the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements. When programmes are first introduced the College checks they are fit for purpose and continues to monitor standards through their lifecycle. This is achieved by procedures set by the University, and through the College internally, by the Academic Quality Directorate.

1.15   Overall, the review team found that staff have a clear understanding and ownership of the process of monitoring the definitive records. The College takes effective steps to ensure students have access to a definitive record of the programme, which constitutes the reference point for its monitoring and review. Students gave positive feedback about the detailed information they are provided with. The review team concludes that Expectation A2.2 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.16   The College's senior management team (SMT) approves the initial concept for new programmes, with input from the AQC and support and advice from the College Advisory Board. New programme concepts are discussed and approved by the AQC, identifying key programme leads and task groups to produce the business cases prior to submitting them to the University. Task groups, which work with guidance from the University's link tutors and the Partnerships Manager, develop the detail of new programmes once they have received outline approval of the business case, and report directly to the Provost and SMT, and to the AQC. The College's local processes and records are developing, but continue to need further refinement to meet its responsibilities with regard to Expectation A3.1.

1.17   The review team considered minutes of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), AQC, SMT and the College Advisory Board; reports submitted to the University; the annual academic report; and a self-evaluation document submitted for this review. The team met the Provost, senior staff, academic staff, the University's link academic staff, the Partnerships Manager and employers.

1.18   The College and its new campus at Wembley are developing rapidly, growing both student numbers and programmes offered. This has resulted in rapid growth of academic staff numbers, both to deliver current programmes and develop those that currently have provisional approval. The timetable for final approval of new programmes under development for 2015-16 is challenging, incomplete at the time of this review, and currently outside the College's and the University's agreed timetable. This is a result of the significant revisions required to some programmes' documentation following the April 2015 validation event, and the limited prior experience current academic staff have of academic programme leadership and development.

1.19   Academic staffing is currently in the process of being strengthened by the appointment of four new academic heads of school, two of whom joined the College in June 2015 immediately prior to the review. These senior academic appointments are intended to provide more effective leadership and management of provision. The College's intention is that all four heads of school will in future be members of the AQC, meet regularly with the Provost, and that one head of school will also sit on the College's SMT. These developments are intended to provide increased strategic academic oversight.

1.20   The AQC's membership and terms of reference have been developed from the previous, less formally constituted, Academic Quality Directorate meetings. They currently share several similar or identical remits with the ASC. Scrutiny of the 2014-15 minutes of the Academic Quality Directorate/Committee showed that the Committee's agenda and business was still largely operational, responsive, and data-driven, rather than focused on academic strategy, planning and development. The strengthening of the senior academic membership of the Committee should enable the recommendation from the College's HER in 2014 to 'further develop and implement its quality assurance structures and policies, clarify responsibilities, and identify clear reporting lines and actions' to become more fully embedded.

1.21   The review team's meeting with academic staff confirmed their involvement in leading the development of new programmes for 2015-16 and 2016-17. For many staff this was their first experience of academic programme development. In the case of the College's first master's level programme, leadership of programme development had been provided by a senior academic who has now left. The Academic Quality Directorate has provided some staff development to support academic staff in their new programme leadership roles, and an in-house certificate of higher education is currently being put in place through an additional external collaborative partner. Following the initial validation approval events many new programmes have required further development. The review team **recommends** that, by December 2015, the College ensure that academic staff are appropriately skilled, supported and developed to design and deliver the College's planned and future academic programmes.

1.22   The Academic Quality Directorate confirmed that all resources required for student number growth and new programme expansion in 2015-16 will be in place by the start of August 2015. These resources would include additional teaching rooms and library facilities; computer equipment, including laptops; and academic and support staff appointments. In the meeting with support staff and through documentary evidence, it was confirmed that a range of staff development provision is also provided, and a more strategic approach is being taken to new course developments, for example recognising that additional and different employability and support needs will arise for postgraduate students from 2015-16.

1.23   Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate. Although the College is using the University's processes effectively to approve its new programmes, it has not yet embedded robust oversight and recording of academic strategy, planning and development processes within its own committees. These matters are also addressed under Expectations A2.1 and B1. The College is currently in the process of securing an experienced academic team to lead new programme developments.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

1.24   The College operates according to the University's assessment regulations and is further developing its own procedures as part of its Quality Assurance Manual. Details of all assessments are provided in module handbooks, and detailed assessment briefs provide a specification for each module. Questions for both examinations and coursework are internally moderated and then sent to the relevant external examiner. The College operates an effective assessment moderation process, which has recently been reviewed and updated. These processes enable the College to meet Expectation A3.2 in principle.

1.25   The review team considered a range of evidence, including module and course handbooks, assessment briefs, examples of moderated coursework and marked exams, external examiners' reports and validation documents; and met staff and students to test whether this Expectation was met.

1.26   Students were universally supportive of the quality of documentation provided in programme and module handbooks. They consider that module handbooks provide them with clear assessment criteria for meeting module learning outcomes. Students also confirmed that the College VLE is central to their learning and assessment; online assessment and feedback are normally provided through electronic submission of coursework, which the review team confirmed through their own scrutiny of VLE content.

1.27   College staff provided evidence of clear internal verification processes and of external moderation by the validating University. A summary of aggregated assessment data identifying any underperforming students is included in monthly reports and monitored by the ASC as part of student progression monitoring.

1.28   The review team saw evidence of appropriate processes at the final Examination Board meeting of 2014, but noted that, although external examiners are appointed to oversee Levels 5 and 6 of the programmes, currently no interim awards at Levels 4 and 5 are defined. The external examiner's 2014 report confirms that academic standards of the University and relevant national benchmarks have been applied appropriately.

1.29   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low, as appropriate regulations, policies and processes are in place, and the College is appropriately communicating and applying these policies.

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

1.30   The College undertakes monitoring and review of its programmes utilising the University's Programme Review and Evaluation (PRE) and Strategic University Review and Evaluation (SURE) processes, and is refining its local procedures as its programmes develop and evolve.

1.31   The College submits an annual review and evaluation report covering all its programmes each year to the University, the most recent being in November 2014, covering the three continuing programmes at the Burnley campus. PRE reports are being written at the Wembley campus for each new programme for the first time in 2014-15. However, these will not be finalised until all second-semester teaching, assessments and outcomes are complete. A SURE report incorporating the new programmes delivered at Wembley will not be completed for the first time until after the end of the 2014-15 academic year. The policies and procedures of the University, as applied by the College, allow Expectation A3.3 to be met in theory.

1.32   The review team scrutinised the College's monitoring and review processes and their effectiveness through consideration of the PRE and SURE documentation, minutes of College committees, the University's annual review and evaluation process, and through meetings with staff and students.

1.33   The combination of PRE and SURE annual reporting processes operated by the University are carefully followed by the College. These provide the potential to ensure that academic standards are upheld. However, the mechanisms by which the self-evaluation included in PRE and SURE is scrutinised, overseen and reported within the College's senior committee structure is still maturing, through the recent establishment of the AQC to provide direction for this activity.

1.34   The ASC meets monthly and considers detailed reports on each programme, including attendance, retention, student progress and other operational data. Minutes of the ASC provide evidence of the inclusion of PRE in its agenda; these are also contained in its remit. The ASC remit includes the power to '…oversee the process of self-evaluation and receive and review outcomes and issues arising from the process', and the review team was able to find some evidence in recent AQC agendas and minutes of integrative and reflective analysis. Consideration is given to executive summaries of the ASC monthly reports. However, there is currently limited evidence to confirm the effectiveness of these processes. The 2014-15 PRE reports have yet to be finalised and reported through the College's revised committee structure and to the University. There has not yet been a SURE report incorporating the Wembley campus as, at the time of the review, the College had not completed a full academic year cycle. Under the University's validation arrangements, programmes are subject to periodic review after six years.

1.35   Student module feedback forms and Student Council views inform the compilation of PRE and SURE, and two student representatives are now included in the membership of

the AQC, although students have, so far, only had an embryonic voice in committee business.

1.36   Overall, the review team concludes that Expectation A3.3 is met and the associated level of risk is low. This is because the College is satisfactorily operating the University's annual monitoring processes. However, the recent restructuring of College committees and their remits has yet to embed fully senior academic and managerial scrutiny and oversight of programme monitoring and review. This matter is also addressed under Expectation B8.

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

1.37   The College meets its obligations to use external and independent expertise in programme development processes. The College has responsibility for nominating external examiners who are appointed and inducted into their role by the University. External representation is used in programme approval processes, including design, critical review of validation and periodic review practices, by the University.

1.38   These activities were tested by the review team through meetings with staff, members of the Advisory Board, and looking at external examiners' reports, course development records and validation reports.

1.39   The College is supported in its work by an Advisory Board, which acts as a critical friend, receiving regular executive summary reports and commenting on the College's programmes and future development plans. The Advisory Board keeps its approaches under review to ensure effective support to the College during its period of significant expansion. External examiners' reports confirm that academic standards are being maintained.

1.40   The College is actively engaged with networks of employers and sector partners in the design, content and delivery of courses. Advice is sought, and acted upon, regarding course and curriculum development. A mix of practitioner and academic input forms a particularly strong part of the College's enrichment and work placement offer to students.

1.41   The review team found that procedures work effectively, and externality is evident in programme development, approval and delivery processes. The review team concludes that Expectation A3.4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

1.43   Although all the applicable Expectations in this area have been met, the risk is judged as moderate in two areas: Expectations A2.1 and A3.1. In all sections related to academic standards the College is also required to adhere to the procedures of its awarding body.

1.44   The review team identified no areas of good practice but makes two recommendations. The recommendations require the College to further develop, rationalise and update quality assurance and enhancement documentation to reflect the new structures for management and academic governance, and to ensure that academic staff are appropriately skilled, supported and developed to design and deliver the College's planned and future academic programmes.

1.45   Overall, the review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body at the College **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　　There has been a significant round of new programme development since the last HER in 2014. Five new programmes have been designed and delivered in 2014-15. Ten further new programmes (including a master's programme) are planned for delivery at Wembley in 2015-16 (three of which will also be delivered at Burnley). Seven of these new programmes are currently expected to go ahead following the validation in April 2015 and subject to completion of validation conditions by July 2015. In two cases this includes full re-presentation of the programmes.

2.2　　The College's new programme proposals are validated through its partner programme approval processes. New programmes are developed according to the College's validation flowchart, which sets out the stages in developing the initial business case for new programmes. This process includes outline approval by the University and the subsequent stages of detailed programme development leading to the formal University validation event. Final approval for the introduction of new programmes is the responsibility of the University. The College continues to develop its internal processes to meet Expectation B1 through its own oversight and liaison with its validating partner.

2.3　　The review team considered a range of documentary evidence, including the minutes of meetings of senior management, the Advisory Board, College committees, and the activities of programme development teams, together with validation reports and meetings with senior staff, academic staff and staff from the University.

2.4　　In response to recommendations in the College's 2014 HER report, the remit of the Academic Quality Directorate has been revised to form a new AQC. However, the AQC's terms of reference do not explicitly mention its role in providing scrutiny, oversight and strategic guidance on programme design and development. As the Committee has only adopted its new constitution and remit during 2014-15, it has yet to oversee a complete cycle of new programme development. To date, it has simply reported progress of new College programmes through the University's processes.

2.5　　New programmes are proposed by the College where market demand aligns with its academic specialisation. The SMT is responsible for agreeing resources (including staffing, physical, learning and support) for proposed programmes, with the AQC overseeing academic programme development. This Committee will be strengthened by the inclusion of the new heads of school, who are currently being appointed. Once approved by the Provost, a programme leader and task group are identified, in conjunction with a link tutor, to write the business case for outline approval by the University. A nominal timeframe for the different stages of initial and full validation is indicated in the College documentation. However, the review team found that new programmes being validated for delivery in 2015-16 are following a much tighter development timescale. The deadlines specified are not yet being met in the projected timetable for initial stages of validation of proposed 2016-17 programmes. The team found little evidence of formal recording or reporting of the internal

milestones of programme development described in the flowchart, except for the final documentation submitted to the University for initial and full validation. There are also some inconsistencies between the flowcharts shown in current College programme development process descriptions, with consequent uncertainty as to the expected sequence of internal authorisation.

2.6   The College's internal programme development process has yet to be fully and rigorously defined or recorded, and consequently the College's internal programme development documentation remains embryonic, informal and limited. The review team **recommends** that, by December 2015, the College formalise and thoroughly record the internal deliberations concerning new programme development, and ensure effective academic scrutiny.

2.7   Overall, the review team concludes that the College does not meet Expectation B1, and that the associated level of risk continues to be moderate. Although the College is using the University's processes effectively to approve its new programmes, it has not yet developed and embedded a rigorous and auditable internal development process linked to the University's requirements, with consistent milestones, accountability and timescales. These weaknesses are compensated for by the checks within the University's validation process, which ensure that appropriate standards, resources and documentation are achieved prior to programme approval.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.8   The College process for recruitment, selection and admission of students is based on the University's requirements as set out in the collaborative partnership agreement and in the University's and the College's admissions policies. College systems follow appropriate processes for Expectation B2 to be met.

2.9   The review team examined documents, including University and College admissions policies, the collaborative partnership agreement, operations manual and minutes from the AQC. The team also met staff and students involved with recruitment, selection and admissions to examine the effectiveness of the admissions policy and procedures for application, enrolment and induction.

2.10   Responsibility for admissions is shared between the College and the University. The admissions function for all standard applicants is administered by the University, with the College reviewing and assessing all non-standard and borderline applications. In cases where the decision is borderline, the College invites applicants to attend an assessment day and interview. All undergraduate programmes are listed on UCAS under the Buckinghamshire New University institutional code. Currently, international applications are on hold owing to the University's Tier 4 licence being suspended. Therefore, the College does not intend to enrol international students at either Wembley or Burnley during 2015-16. Applications for the proposed master's programme will be made directly to the College in the first instance. There is a clear basis for the accreditation of prior learning.

2.11   The College appointed a full-time admissions manager in January 2015 and has further plans to expand the admissions team in line with the overall strategic plan to increase student numbers. The College's admissions manager is in regular contact with managers and team leaders in the University's admissions team. The College operates a customer relationship management system to record, monitor and review its decisions. The College is committed to undertake an external review of the admissions process; following a discussion with the national Supporting Professionalism in Admissions scheme, the College has agreed for Supporting Professionalism in Admissions to carry out a 'health check' in July 2015. The College is aware of the responsibility to adhere to the Consumer Rights Act guidance for higher education providers and is committed to meeting the compliance deadline by October 2015.

2.12   There is extensive support provided for all students during the admission, application and induction process. Disabled students are supported in applying for funding allocations to be in place prior to the start of their course and all students are guided through the student finance process. During the application process, students and parents are well informed and in regular contact with the College through taster days and open days, and with meetings with tutors and support staff. The review team considers the extensive individualised support provided for students during the application, enrolment and induction process to be **good practice**.

2.13   Overall, the review team found that recruitment, selection and admissions processes at the College are robust, fair and accessible. The College has effective policies in place, the admissions process is well managed, and students reflect positively on their experiences. The extensive support provided for students is considered good practice. The review team concludes that Expectation B2 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.14   The College uses the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy as a framework guide to practice. The College promotes a shared understanding of the strategy among staff, students and other stakeholders. Information on learning and teaching is provided for all programmes of study. These approaches are supported in detailed module handbooks, which provide schemes of work and lesson plans. The approaches taken to delivery and management of teaching and learning enable the College to meet Expectation B3 in principle.

2.15   The review team tested this process by reading a range of documentary evidence, including policies and strategy documents, handbooks, staff CVs, self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans, lesson observation data, student questionnaires and strategy documents. The team also met senior managers and teaching staff, students from across the provision, and representatives of the University.

2.16   Staff recruitment is strategically managed to ensure a mix of practitioner and academic experience, including those with the experience and qualifications for delivering higher education. Many new staff have been recruited for the College's significant expansion at the Wembley campus. This has enabled a restructuring of staff into academic schools focused around subject disciplines. The structure will be fully operational prior to the start of the new academic year. The new management and organisational structure devolves responsibility for refreshing the curriculum and developing new programmes to the heads of school, although responsibility for the overall quality of the programmes is not explicitly demonstrated in the job specification.

2.17   Staff receive a full induction and maintain their knowledge of College practices through regular staff meetings and engagement in open day recruitment activity. Teaching staff who do not have a teaching qualification are required to achieve this, or professional recognition, within two years of their appointment. As part of the planned delivery at master's level, the College is seeking to develop postgraduate learning and teaching training for staff.

2.18   The affirmation of actions being taken by the College, identified in the 2014 HER, to develop a more strategic approach to staff development has encouraged the development of a more coherent approach. The College is strengthening its approach to learning and teaching and has allocated cross-College responsibility to one of the incoming heads of school. This new management role is intended to include the development of a more planned and systematic approach to the continuing professional development of academic staff. The review team **affirms** the recent appointment of a new Head of School with specific responsibility for leading initiatives in learning and teaching, and academic development.

2.19   The College provides plentiful opportunities for professional development, such as a staff development priority plan. Activity is evaluated, and workload models afford opportunities for staff to engage in meetings and other staff development. Staff development on assessment has been undertaken following recommendations from the University's link tutor and comments from the external examiner. Other staff development activities include

the introduction of an action research group focusing on teaching and learning. Although the College had significant new programme development activity during 2014-5, staff engaged in these developments confirmed that this process had not been underpinned by specific staff development relating to programme design. Validation reports for new programme proposals demonstrate the need for the College to address this in future development cycles, to ensure efficient and effective validation outcomes. The University confirmed that the strengthening of the jointly convened Operations Board with the College was intended as a result of these programme validation outcomes, and to support the College's future expansion plans.

2.20   The College operates an appraisal process where staff consider their current teaching and learning practice and reflect on their approaches to academic and professional delivery. Appraisals set objectives and plans for individual's professional development for the coming year. The College's teaching observation management process follows an Ofsted model, although the College states that it has adapted the criteria used to reflect higher education practice. It is not clear that the criteria used address the higher levels of critical engagement and research expected to support higher education learning activity. The College has used the observation findings to develop conversations with staff to inform improvements and reports that no recent session observations have been graded less than 'good'. The module tutor handbook provides helpful guidance on delivery practices expected. Opportunities to identify and share good practice are provided at weekly programme team meetings or in monthly staff meetings.

2.21   Learning resources are under further development at the Wembley campus, with planned expansion of facilities and a greater use of accommodation within Wembley Stadium. Planning of resources to support new programmes has been confirmed for 2015-16, and budgets for staffing and resources will in future be devolved to schools. Where facilities are used off-site, contractual arrangements are in place, with service level agreements managed by the College. Incoming heads of school are engaged in assessing the extent of the need for additional specialist resources, such as laboratories and specialist facilities. The College is engaged in extending its network of specialist practitioners to deliver the programmes.

2.22   The College's VLE provides effective student support and programme management ensures consistent practice. The My.UCFB learning environment provides an important resource for students, who are also able to access the University's VLE. Academic mentoring supports students' development, with records maintained by staff. Specialist support for students' study skills and academic practice is available, and students consider the mentoring process to be helpful and supportive. Students report satisfaction with the levels of staff expertise and teaching practices at the College.

2.23   The College has effective policies and procedures in place to deliver, monitor and enhance learning and teaching. These include teaching observations, support for staff development and the extensive approaches used to monitor and respond to student feedback. The College is developing a more strategic approach to staff development. The review team concludes that Expectation B3 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

2.24   The College's student support processes begin with recruitment activity which focuses on putting students first. Comprehensive induction programmes provide students with introductions to College processes and procedures. Handbooks provide effective information to students on all aspects of support. Academic mentoring processes are in place and are well embedded in programmes. Support processes are tailored and individualised in response to the needs of students. The College's processes enable it to meet the Expectation in principle.

2.25   The review team considered the support and guidance available to students by meeting senior academic and support staff, and students from across the provision, by consideration of the College documents supporting the processes.

2.26   Students are informed of the various support activities available, and effective use is made of communication tools and social media. Students are assigned an academic mentor who meets with them a minimum of once each term, but is also available to meet at a student's request. Students are allocated pastoral support tutors, and student progress is tracked at weekly meetings between student services and programme leaders. This allows the College to give thorough consideration to individual student's attendance, progression and achievement. Programme leaders are responsible for overseeing student performance and progress against specific performance indicators. These are evaluated in detailed monthly reports considered by the SMT. Students considered to be at risk of not meeting their potential, and those who can be challenged to aim higher, are identified and their progress closely reviewed. Student services provide a wide range of support, which is evaluated for its effectiveness at the new campus. Student requests for specific developments, such as employability skills are responded to well. Skilled staff provide a wide range of support and guidance, including student finance, careers, welfare, specific learning needs, counselling and accommodation. The review team considers the comprehensive range of individually tailored and flexible support for students to be **good practice**.

2.27   The College has developed a complementary curriculum to enrich students' academic programmes and embed employability skills throughout the curriculum. Visiting professionals and guest speakers contribute valuable expertise in developing practical understanding of the professional sports context. The complementary curriculum also provides opportunities to undertake placements with employers in a variety of settings. The College has recently introduced an Employability Steering Committee to manage placements. There are opportunities to engage in a strategic management and leadership programme, which is delivered by a leading figure in the football business. These activities are highly regarded by students, although they are not formally assessed as part of the programmes, but they may be certificated as a voluntary part of the student experience. Staff evaluate student participation in the complementary curriculum and are reviewing the opportunities provided in light of expansion of programmes and development of master's level provision. Strategic consideration of employability activities is being strengthened by allocation of specific senior academic staff responsibility in the new structure. The review team considers the extension of the use of high profile guest speakers to support the needs of an increasingly broad range of sports-related programmes to be **good practice**.

2.28   Overall, the review team found strong evidence that there are extensive resources and support to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The College appropriately monitors and evaluates their implementation. There are also many opportunities provided for engagement with leading professionals in the sports business. The review team concludes therefore that Expectation B4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.29   The College is committed to ensuring that the views of students, individually and collectively, are captured and addressed. There are deliberative processes in place that enable all students to be actively involved at both the Wembley and Burnley campuses. Student representatives have access to training and support to fulfil their role and the College creates an environment within which students and staff engage in meaningful discussions. The Student Council, student programme representatives, surveys and focus groups provide a range of opportunities for all students to engage in the quality assurance and enhancement of their programmes. These activities and processes allow Expectation B5 to be met in theory.

2.30   The review team evaluated the steps taken by the College to engage students in the continuous improvement of their learning experience by reviewing College policies, the self-evaluation document, student submission, the student voice operational manual, minutes of the Student Council, module evaluations, focus group minutes and student surveys. The team met students, academic staff and support staff to discuss the extent to which students feel able to contribute to quality assurance and enhancement in a meaningful way.

2.31   Students based at the Wembley campus confirmed that, with small class sizes, they often prefer to give informal feedback directly to their tutors or academic mentor. Students report high satisfaction rates about the pastoral support provided at the Wembley campus. All programmes have an elected student representative and feedback is collected through surveys, focus groups and end-of-module committee meetings. Outcomes are included in the academic standards reports, module review reports, and PRE reports. All are considered by the AQC. These approaches provide students with the opportunity to shape and implement improvements.

2.32   There is an effective You Said, We Did system, and students are invited to attend the Advisory Board and provide feedback on their learning experience. Students complete an annual survey based on the National Student Survey template and the College intends to benchmark this against institution and programme data. Surveys and module questionnaires are now provided electronically, which allows them to be collected, analysed and reviewed more effectively. The Students' Union organises leisure and sporting events for all students. The College approach to build and integrate a cohesive student body and to extend students' involvement in quality assurance processes will be developed further by inviting the Student Council chairs from both Wembley and Burnley campuses to attend the quarterly AQC.

2.33   The College intends to extend links with the University for current and future representatives to make use of their training and monetary incentive scheme. New Student Council members will be appointed in 2015-16 with succession planning in place for experienced students to mentor newly appointed members. The College uses feedback from students from programme committee meetings, module evaluations and focus groups in the design of course content. A member of staff is invited to attend meetings of the Student Council. There are a number of examples of actions taken as a result of student feedback, for example: purchasing more law books for the library, creating better classroom layout

arrangements, and moving teaching to adjacent seminar rooms so that students do not feel isolated.

2.34 Overall, the College is further developing an ethos of student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The College places value on student contribution and uses a variety of ways to encourage participation, which is widespread. It actively and effectively seeks feedback from its students and responds appropriately. There is a wide range of formal and informal initiatives to gather and respond to student feedback. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation B5 is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.35   Assessment information for each programme is communicated to students in module and programme handbooks, and in programme specifications. Individual module guides contain clear summaries of assessments. Assignment briefs provide detailed and specific expectations. The College's VLE provides mechanism for the submission, marking and feedback of all module assessment to students. The College's module tutor guide provides a full description of module documentation, assessment design, marking guidance and online learning support. The internal verification procedure specifies a marking period of three weeks, followed by a moderation and internal verification period of one week before final grades can be released. The College organises reflective meetings annually to review and update its internal verification procedures. The College's assessment processes enable it to meet Expectation B6.

2.36   The review team met senior staff, academic staff and students. The team also reviewed programme specifications, module handbooks, assessment briefs, external examiner reports, programme handbooks, the University's assessment policies, and minutes from meetings of the Student Council.

2.37   A range of assessment practices is used across each programme, comprising written examinations, coursework and practical work, as set out in the programme specification. Students indicate that they are happy with the assessment information provided to them in programme and module handbooks and online, and generally happy with the quantity, quality and timeliness of assignment feedback. Module documentation and programme handbooks are comprehensive, complete and well organised. Students receive feedback on their work in a standardised format through the VLE, using plagiarism detection software. The College's policy states that feedback will normally be within three weeks and students confirmed that this timetable is generally met.

2.38   Students' academic progress is monitored through the College's monthly reports and overseen by the ASC, with summary monthly reports also going to the AQC, the SMT and the Advisory Board. Assessment tasks are reviewed as part of annual module review carried out through the University's PRE process. The University provides oversight and feedback through in-year moderation visits by the link tutor.

2.39   The final grades for modules are approved by the Examination Board, held under the auspices of the University, with review of marks achieved in coursework and examinations. Exception reports are triggered where outcomes are outside the normal range, and good practice flagged and reported where appropriate. A full external examiner's report was submitted in 2013-14 for the first time, in accordance with the University's expectations, as this was the first College cohort to graduate. The examiner's report noted a need for more descriptive feedback to be provided to students and improved referencing, and this has been addressed through the provision of additional assessment training for academic staff and a rigorous programme and module review process.

2.40   The review team concludes that Expectation B6 is met and the associated level of risk is low, as appropriate policies and processes are in place at the College, and these are consistently communicated and applied. The University and the external examining process ensures independent external oversight and feedback on assessment.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.41   The University is responsible for appointing external examiners for validated programmes. Currently, one external examiner serves the three original programmes delivered at the Burnley campus, and in 2014 provided a report for the first graduating cohort. As 2014-15 was the first year of delivery at the Wembley campus there have as yet been no external examiners' reports. The examiner for the Burnley programmes will cover delivery of the same provision at Wembley. Additionally, the College is working with the University to consider an appropriate model for external examining for the newly validated programmes, and in recognising the wider discipline coverage needed. There are no intermediate staged awards at Levels 4 or 5. The BSc (Hons) Sports Psychology programme, delivered in franchised partnership with the University, will have a shared examiner. Nominations for external examiners are made by the College to a role specification and regulations determined by the University. The external examiner is inducted at the University and visits the College to meet staff. These arrangements allow the College to meet Expectation B7 in principle.

2.42   The review team considered external examiner reports, CVs of external examiners, a handbook and policies relating to the induction of examiners, and minutes of relevant committees, and met staff.

2.43   The University sets approaches for validating assessment strategies, regulations, recording and communicating assessment decisions, and management and oversight of examination boards. External examiners attend examination boards. Following an affirmation made in the 2014 HER, the College has taken steps to ensure that external examiners' reports provide comprehensive information and an overview of the standards and quality of each programme. Individual reports will be required for each of the validated programmes.

2.44   Reports are sent by the external examiners simultaneously to the College and the University. The programme leader at the College discusses the reports' content with their programme team and makes them available to staff and students on the VLE. Discussions of the detailed comments from examiners are undertaken with programme team and module leaders. Responses will be overseen by the incoming heads of school, who have operational management responsibility for programmes. Two new external examiners have been appointed for the expanded provision at the Wembley campus, and mapping of their responsibilities to the newly validated provision has been undertaken to ensure appropriate skills and workload. The University limits responsibility of 240 credits to one external examiner.

2.45   Overall, the College is taking steps to ensure that an appropriate range of external examiners is appointed to support the newly validated programmes. The College is working to ensure that reports provide comprehensive feedback, and staff are using reports effectively to plan improvements to the provision. The review team concludes that Expectation B7 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.46   The College's Quality Assurance Manual, supplemented by the operations manual, provides broad guidance on the annual review and self-evaluation processes. The College currently relies primarily on the SURE report to inform its institutional oversight. However, this report does not provide full evaluation of the performance of individual programmes, which is recorded in more detail against the University's PRE template.

2.47   Detailed monthly reports on individual programmes are provided to the ASC by programme leaders and cover many of the expected data contributing to annual programme monitoring. These are, however, primarily used for monitoring and reviewing student progress rather than reflectively evaluating programmes. The College is currently evolving and embedding processes designed to allow it to meet Expectation B8.

2.48   In testing the College's approaches, the review team met senior staff, academic staff and students. In addition, it considered the Quality Assurance Manual, and minutes of the ASC and the AQC, and other team meetings.

2.49   The PRE documents currently being produced by the College at the Wembley campus for the 2014-15 academic year use the University's template. These provide a good summary of student achievement, feedback on their experience, programme developments and innovations, and external feedback from the College and University link tutor. They also include commentary on the employability and complementary curriculum and an action plan for improvement. However, there is currently no reference to the PRE in the College's Quality Assurance Manual, although the PRE template provides a solid basis for programme monitoring and review. There is good evidence that the PRE is reviewed and updated by programme teams regularly during the year, which ensures the achievement of a fully reflective report.

2.50   PRE progress reviews are reported during the year to the ASC and, once completed for the academic year, to the AQC. For 2013-14 only a combined PRE and SURE report for the Burnley campus was submitted to the University, as this predated the commencement of programmes at Wembley. The University considered this to be a sound evaluative report and action plan, with elements of good practice identified. Primary responsibility for each PRE lies with relevant programme leaders and their academic schools, which come into existence from June 2015.

2.51   The remit of the College's AQC includes strategic oversight of standards and quality, and of the institutional self-evaluation process. This committee was initiated as part of the College's academic management oversight during 2014-15 in response to the HER 2014 report. It has yet to include any input from the newly appointed heads of school. At the time of the current review, membership of the AQC was under revision to reflect the College's new school-based academic structure, and the remit and terms of reference of the Committee are also being reconsidered, with the intention that the AQC should progressively develop into the College's Academic Board. However, there is a lack of clarity, and significant inconsistencies, between the remits of the AQC and the proposed Academic Board. Neither remit is consistent with the current academic structure planned for 2015-16. The review team found no evidence that any formal discussion, scrutiny or oversight of the

remit and membership of the AQC, or of the proposed Academic Board, had been recorded at AQC, the SMT or the Advisory Board. The College intends to undertake this scrutiny early in the 2015-16 academic year.

2.52   Some progress has been made against the recommendation from the 2014 HER to introduce and embed systematic processes for annual review and monitoring at programme and institutional level. However, in light of the continuing lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, and the ineffective reporting of outcomes, the review team **recommends** that, by December 2015, the College revise the remit of the senior AQC, ensure robust scrutiny, and effectively record the outcomes of annual programme review.

2.53   Overall, the review team concludes that Expectation B8 is not met and the associated level of risk is moderate. This is because the College has yet to stabilise and secure the remit and membership for its senior AQC and embed processes to oversee and fully record the review and monitoring of programmes.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.54   The College's approach to student appeals and complaints is clear. Appeals and complaints are first addressed internally to see if informal resolution can be achieved. If a student remains dissatisfied they can lodge a formal appeal or complaint with the University. College procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints are clearly explained during induction and in student handbooks, which allows Expectation B9 to be met.

2.55   The review team spoke with students to assess their understanding of the College appeal and complaints process. Additionally, the review team looked at policies, procedures, student surveys, focus group minutes, Student Council minutes and SMT minutes.

2.56   Students are clear about the complaints and appeals processes and know where to find relevant information. Students confirm that informal resolutions are first sought, although they are aware of the formal University process if the complaint cannot be resolved locally. The College also reports all informal complaints to the University. Information is available to students in a variety of ways, for example on the VLE, in handbooks, and during induction sessions. Guidance is also provided by academic mentors. The AQC and ASC receive reports on complaints or appeals and track issues raised. The College follows the procedures for complaints and appeals established by the University, which has overall responsibility.

2.57   The review team found evidence that issues are often dealt with informally in a timely and fair manner and appropriate action taken. Any informal complaints are well documented, monitored and evaluated effectively, and kept on the Record of Informal Student Complaints and Outcomes Register. The review team considers the collection of data to document, analyse and respond to informal complaints to be **good practice**.

2.58   Overall, the College's complaints and appeals procedures are clear and fit for purpose. Processes are effective and well understood by students and staff. The academic appeals process is made clear to students within the requirements of the University. Complaints are often resolved at an informal stage and the College's analysis and evaluation of these is good practice. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.59   The College does not deliver learning opportunities with other organisations. However, it does have responsibility for the effective management of its arrangements with employers and placement providers, where learning takes place within the work environment and constitutes an integral aspect of the student's programme of study.

2.60   The College has expanded its provision at Wembley Stadium. Formal site visit records show agreements to manage and deliver learning opportunities at the Wembley campus. The College recognises that it will need to develop networks and manage contractual processes to secure access to the specialist facilities to support formal elements of work-based learning as part of the new programmes under development. The College is committed to work placement and experience for its students, in both the UK and abroad. This is undertaken as part of a developing employability strategy. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the College to meet Expectation B10.

2.61   The review team tested whether the Expectation is being met by talking to relevant staff and students, and by scrutinising documentary evidence including placement handbooks. The team also met a representative of the College's Advisory Board.

2.62   Work placement activities are currently extracurricular and managed through the complementary curriculum programme. No academic credit is attached to these arrangements. Their role in developing students' skills and understanding of the sports and associated business activities is rated very highly by students. The discretionary approach adopted by the College in determining students' engagement in the complementary curriculum opportunities are operated fairly, based on students' attendance and commitment.

2.63   Overall, arrangements for managing students' work experience are managed appropriately. The College understands its responsibilities for setting up and supporting arrangements to provide and secure work experience, and job descriptions and expectations are made clear. Students maintain records of activity and confirm the value of the experience gained. Senior staff and others involved in the management of placements understand their responsibilities, and ensure these work well in practice. The review team concludes that Expectation B10 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

2.64   The College does not offer research degrees, therefore this Expectation does not apply.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.66   Two of the applicable Expectations in this area have not been met and the subsequent level of risk is moderate in both areas. There are two recommendations. The review team considers that, to meet Expectation B1, the College needs to ensure there is a more effective and well documented internal process for developing and approving new programmes, and, for Expectation B8, to ensure that the senior quality committee provides robust oversight of annual monitoring.

2.67   There are four examples of good practice: the support for students during application, enrolment and induction; the comprehensive range of individually tailored and flexible support; the use of high profile guest speakers; and the process for recording and monitoring informal complaints.

2.68   The review team makes one affirmation supporting the recent appointment of a head of school with responsibility to lead initiatives in learning, teaching and academic development.

2.69   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the College **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 provides a wide range of information for stakeholders, including prospective and current students, staff and employers. The College's strategic vision and mission are made available to students and other stakeholders, and communicated effectively through its brand and published information. The review team reviewed a wide range of information and material published in hard copy and electronically. The website contains information on programmes of study and institutional information. Key information on purpose, values and programmes are also published in student handbooks, the prospectus and a staff handbook. The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

3.2 The review team scrutinised a variety of published information both electronically and in hard copy, met staff and students, and spoke to members of the Advisory Board. Additionally, internal policies and procedures were considered to test that information is trustworthy, fit for purpose and accessible to prospective and current students.

3.3 The University approves all marketing literature (hard copy, electronic and social media) that refers to the University or its programmes prior to release or publication. In addition, the College publishes a range of other policy and strategy statements, as well as various guidance materials for the use of staff and students. The College marketing and promotion approvals process flowchart was introduced following the previous review, and all staff have been trained to follow this system. Staff understand their responsibilities for information sign off, and policies are routinely and systemically used. The review team **affirms** the approval and implementation of the draft internal policy for information and approval procedures.

3.4 The College has responsibility for the production of definitive programme information, such as programme specifications. Programme information is published on the College website with a full description of the study programme, module information, and the services available to students. The review team found handbooks and module specifications to be detailed and comprehensive.

3.5 The prospectus is considered by the College to be its primary published document, and includes information on programmes, College facilities and support services, and information for applicants on how to apply through UCAS. The 2016-17 prospectus places considerable emphasis on non-assessed elements, including the complementary curriculum. The College is aware that, in light of future legal requirements, and the statutory guidance for higher education providers, extra care needs to be taken to ensure all published literature reflects an accurate and realistic expectation of the potential student experience.

3.6 Communication to applicants and students is also through direct mail, email and social media. The information provided highlights the academic qualities of the programme, the learning environment, the support available, funding requirements, connections with industry, and the relationship with the University. Information on additional enrichment

opportunities like the complementary curriculum is also provided. Module handbooks give clear links to learning outcomes and assessment methods for all existing and new programmes, and give helpful guidance for students on how to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

3.7 Academic Relationship Managers promote the College by visiting schools, colleges and higher education forums and events. The Academic Relationship Managers have a regional responsibility and ensure that prospective students are aware of the support services and programmes offered. The College recognises that, as student numbers increase at each campus, it will become increasingly challenging to arrange one-to-one consultations with applicants.

3.8 The student handbook is focused on welfare matters and is produced in hard copy and electronic forms. It contains a detailed guide to life as a student, with clear information and advice on finance, healthcare, accommodation, personal safety and emergency services. Further improvements are planned to extend the information and support available to students. Detailed course information is published on the My.UCFB VLE, which is regularly updated. My.UCFB is individualised for students, allowing them ready access to all relevant literature for their own programme of study. Students also use discussion forums, social media and news forums. Students are also directed to relevant policies on the VLE. Current students commented positively on the level of advice, guidance and information provided to them throughout the first year at the Wembley campus.

3.9 Social networking platforms are used effectively to communicate with students. These are closely observed by the marketing manager and social media officer. Notice boards are strategically positioned throughout teaching and learning areas and halls of residence, giving pertinent and up-to-date course information, such as timetables, University requirements, examination schedules, and cultural and recreational activities. Digital signage is used effectively to communicate to students, and the College is continuously reviewing media communications. There is a thorough approach to the use of copyright and the College makes an annual return to the Copyright Licensing Agency.

3.10 Overall, the review team found that the wide range of information produced for prospective and current students is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The team affirms the College's intention to formalise and embed the internal approval processes. Students confirm that the information provides an accurate reflection of the College. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.11   In reaching its positive judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low.

3.12   Information published by the College is fit for purpose and trustworthy. Processes for the development and verification of information are understood by staff. Students confirm that information is comprehensive, accessible and helpful to them, and provides them with sound information to support their learning. The review team affirms the College's intention to formalise the internal process for approval of information.

3.13   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the Colleges **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's Enhancement Strategy aims to maximise achievement through a focus on student engagement, employability and experience. This strategy has been further developed and disseminated to staff in response to recommendations in the 2014 HER. The College identifies a number of activities that enhance provision, including: staff appraisal; teaching observation; the focus on graduate skills and employability; teaching, learning and assessment strategies; and staff scholarly and pedagogic activity. The College's complementary curriculum is also identified as a significant positive contribution to enhancement.

4.2   Student data of various types is monitored to measure progress and standards. This is done through regular student feedback surveys, attendance checks, student retention and assessment outcomes, and matters emerging through PRE. At an institutional level, the AQC is intended to play a key role in the strategic oversight of enhancement. However, this role is still developing, as the Committee's remit has been devised during 2014-15, and its membership has not yet stabilised to reflect the College's planned academic structure from June 2015.

4.3   The College provides a rich complementary curriculum, which includes a variety of sports-related activities, development of leadership and management skills, supported placements, work experience and guest speaker seminars. These are complemented by a comprehensive personal tutor and mentor policy, and pastoral support of various kinds provided through student services. The College's processes enable it to meet the Expectation in theory.

4.4   The review team considered a number of documents, including the self-evaluation document, the College's Enhancement Strategy, Strategic University Review and Evaluation reports, PRE reports and committee minutes. The team also discussed enhancement in meetings with the Provost, senior and academic staff, employers, students and student representatives.

4.5   From its scrutiny of the ASC minutes and monthly reports, the review team identified a wide range of improvement activities at the College. These include teaching observation, the dissemination of good practice, peer review, teaching triangles, improvements in learning resources, and staff development. The College's retention and engagement strategies include interventions to improve student mentoring, timetabling and the complementary curriculum, and raising the profile of the student voice through Student Council representation. However, the primary focus of the College's academic monthly reports is on monitoring operational data and students' performance rather than providing a reflective review of potential programme enhancements.

4.6   The College's approach to employability is distinctive because of the intensive involvement of sector-leading professionals in the development of its employment-focused ethos. The complementary curriculum provides key enrichment opportunities for students. These activities are not formally assessed and do not contribute directly to achievement of programme learning outcomes, or the award, although informal certification is offered. The review team was impressed with the quality of contributors to the complementary curriculum and with the way that the College uses its high profile, which incentivises student attendance

at core teaching activities. Students consider this process to be fair and equitable. In addition, the team noted the College's intention to seek relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body accreditation of its programmes in the future, and also suggested that consideration could be given to including certified complementary curriculum activities in students' higher education achievement reports.

4.7   Considerable evidence was supplied showing that student issues at a local level are identified and addressed. The Enhancement Strategy provides a solid foundation, with oversight and monitoring increasing through the AQC. At an institutional level, the AQC is developing an ability to identify and share good practice for dissemination across the institution. This is through oversight of the Quality Enhancement Action Plan and the dissemination of the enhancement and intervention strategies. However, this oversight needs further embedding and extending through a complete annual cycle of meetings. As noted under Expectation B8, the remit and membership of the AQC has not yet stabilised and currently makes no explicit mention of the Committee's role in enhancing students' learning opportunities. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that, by December 2015, the College consolidate and embed a more systematic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

4.8   The review team found that, although the College's strategic approach to enhancement is currently still being developed and embedded, it is increasingly taking deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.9   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.

4.10   The review team considers the Expectation to be met, based on the extent to which the College has introduced, and is integrating, a set of initiatives to enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities.

4.11   However, the College's approach to the monitoring and review of enhancement activity is at an emerging stage. Enhancement is driven informally, rather than systematically embedded within the higher education structures. Procedures for implementing enhancement are not fully developed as part of the annual review and improvement process, which has led to a recommendation in this area. There are no features of good practice or affirmations.

4.12   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 Student experience on all programmes is enriched through activities in the curriculum that provide them with numerous opportunities to develop employability skills. These include visiting speakers, professionals representing various interests and activities from the sports and football industries, site visits and employment-based project work. This is used in some formal assessment practice, and is considered good practice by the external examiner. Many staff have extensive and effective links with employers.

5.2 The complementary curriculum is central to the employability approach adopted by the College. This curriculum is managed by the Employability Steering Committee. The strategic importance of this is recognised by new cross-College roles for incoming senior staff, including a new head of school with designated responsibility for the employability agenda. Employability is also embedded as a key goal of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

5.3 The involvement of a range of high-profile professionals making contributions to the complementary curriculum is extensive. Master classes and specific leadership and management activities offer a rich experience, with opportunities for students to engage and build professional networks for their future employment. These opportunities are central to the College's character and all staff are strongly committed to this ethos. Employment opportunities are kept under review and are intended to be expanded within the curriculum of the new programmes under development.

5.4 The advantages offered by the new College campus at Wembley stadium are being exploited, and students are benefiting from the opportunities presented by learning in a high profile professional environment. A variety of high-quality engagements with a range of sports have been provided and these support student employability. Students maintain their own records of these activities and confirm these opportunities are a highlight of their experience. The College's Advisory Board members assist in providing access to professional networks. Students are aware of this access and appreciate the high degree of support afforded. Overall, the focus on student employability is a strong feature of the provision and embedded in the enrichment activity at the College.

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 27-29 of the Higher Education Review (Plus) 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.

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.

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

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.

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.