Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of UK Business College Ltd

March 2017

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at UK Business College Ltd. The review took place from 7 to 8 March 2017 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Christopher Clare
- Mr Colin Stanfield.

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

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

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

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

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

Key findings

Judgements

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-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**.

- The use of teaching observers' and students' comments on the same session to inform feedback to the tutor (Expectation B3).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations**.

By September 2017:

- to deepen and extend the use of independent expertise in maintaining academic standards (Expectation A3.4)
- to develop a process for the periodic review of programmes (Expectation B8).

By July 2017:

- to make the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy available on the website (Expectations B2, C)
- to make accessible in writing to students the range of academic and pastoral support available (Expectations B4, C)
- to clarify and articulate the processes by which extenuating circumstances would be considered and approved (Expectation B6)
- to clarify and articulate the range of penalties for academic misconduct (Expectation B6)
- to clarify and articulate the procedure for the implementation and monitoring of placement learning (Expectation B10).

About the provider

UK Business College was established in 2012. It is a private limited company and operates from one campus in North Finchley. The College initially offered higher education programmes in Business, primarily to overseas students. When its Tier 4 sponsor licence was revoked by UK Visas and Immigration in 2014, the College refocused its activities on local students studying at further education level.

No programmes were delivered in 2015. In 2016, the College obtained approval to deliver programmes at levels 3-7 from Pearson, Training Qualifications UK (TQUK) and Trinity College London. The College is currently running one level 3 programme in Business Management, awarded by TQUK. Sixty-three students are enrolled on this programme. The College intends to start delivering the Pearson Diploma in Education and Training from the academic year 2017-18, to be followed by the Higher National Diploma in Business from 2019-20. Therefore, at the time of this review, there were no higher education students enrolled at the College.

There are currently three full-time staff fulfilling a number of management roles and two part-time lecturing staff. The College Principal is also a part-time tutor.

The College aims to be a quality higher and further education provider that prepares students for work. It aspires to meet the need of the wider community through establishing partnerships with other public sector higher education institutions.

The last Review for Specific Course Designation in 2014 made two advisable recommendations which the College has fully addressed. The College has completed its annual monitoring and review process and produces programme and module monitoring reports. College policies are now reviewed annually. The College has also addressed the desirable recommendations with regard to the Quality Code and the information updating policy. The requirements of the Quality Code are embedded in College quality policies and procedures and are available to staff in the Quality and Operations Manual. The College has also developed a Public Information Policy. The other two desirable recommendations, related to the standardisation and moderation of summative assessment and the strengthening of employer links, have yet to be implemented. Their implementation is delayed due to the change in circumstances and programmes at the College.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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* (FHEQ) are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1   Starting in the academic year 2017-18 the College intends to run one higher education programme designed and approved by Pearson: the Diploma in Education and Training. The Higher National Diploma in Business is to follow in the academic year 2019-20. The programmes consist of a number of mandatory units and a range of options from which the College can select, within the rules of combination specified by the awarding organisation. The setting of academic standards is the responsibility of the awarding organisation, which ensures that the requirements of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, subject benchmarks and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) are met.

1.2   The programmes planned for delivery at the College are Pearson 'off-the-shelf' programmes. There are currently no plans to develop centre-devised modules. Consequently, the College relies on the awarding organisation to ensure that aspects of Expectation A1, including the alignment of programmes to the FHEQ, are covered. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3   In considering this Expectation, the review team scrutinised the College's quality processes and the awarding organisation's approval of the College. The team also held meetings with senior managers, and academic and professional staff.

1.4   Pearson awards are aligned with the FHEQ via the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and with Subject Benchmark Statements. Academic standards for the programmes to be delivered are embedded in the qualification specifications and guidelines published by Pearson, including key aspects of the assessment of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and threshold academic standards. The College will use the guidance supplied by Pearson in the delivery of the programme, and for the sequencing of units and the combination of core units and electives.

1.5   College staff demonstrated a thorough understanding of the academic framework and requirements of Pearson. Teaching staff showed awareness and knowledge of the processes and procedures set out in the College Quality and Operations Manual and of the Quality Code, the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, which will govern the delivery and assessment of higher education programmes. The College will use the appropriate qualification specifications and has procedures in place that will enable it to adhere to the Pearson requirements for internal and external verification.

1.6   The College will be drawing upon and applying appropriate external and sector reference points, as defined by Pearson, and the review team 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*

Findings

1.7   The College works within the academic framework and regulations established by the awarding organisation. The Quality and Operations Manual sets out the College's approach to quality assurance and details the principles underpinning its approach. The College has lean management and governance structures consisting of the Management Committee (the Executive) and the Teaching and Learning Committee. A Standardisation Committee to support the assessment process is in the process of being established. These arrangements would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met.

1.8   The review team tested the Expectation by examining documentation relating to the College's committee and organisational structures and its quality procedures. The team also met with senior, academic and professional support staff.

1.9   The Quality and Operations Manual is comprehensive and clear. It makes appropriate reference to the awarding organisation academic framework and requirements. All committees have clearly defined lines of responsibility and accountability. The terms of reference for each committee identify the scope of deliberations and the membership. The Teaching and Learning Committee includes student representatives as full members of the committee.

1.10   Staff confirmed that the Teaching and Learning Committee is the body with responsibility for the monitoring and maintenance of academic standards at the College, and gave examples of what it does in this respect and how it relates to the Management Committee. The College is aware of the potential for conflicts of interest within the small staff team when undertaking their various roles, and articulated measures they would take to ensure that conflicts do not occur. Staff members also made continual reference to the awarding organisation in monitoring standards.

1.11   The review team considers that the arrangements in place at the College for implementing the awarding organisation's academic framework and regulations and maintaining academic standards are proportionate and effective for a College of this size. Therefore, the team considers that the Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

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

Findings

1.12   Pearson is responsible for providing definitive programme information. Qualification specifications form the definitive records for each programme and include the aims, learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit. They are maintained and periodically reviewed by the awarding organisation. The College uses them as a reference point to devise its own delivery schemes and for the annual monitoring and review of the programmes. The College makes key information from the specifications available to students. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.13   In considering this Expectation the review team examined the awarding organisation's qualification specifications, College programme handbooks and the virtual learning environment (VLE). The team also met with senior and academic staff.

1.14   Staff are fully aware of the relative responsibilities of the awarding organisation and the College for maintaining, monitoring and reviewing records of programmes and qualifications. Based on the information provided by Pearson in the qualification specifications for higher education programmes planned for delivery, the College produces programme information for students in the programme handbook and on the VLE. The programme handbook for the Diploma in Education and Training includes summary information on the course structure and delivery, unit details and assessment methods. Students can access the full qualification specification on the VLE.

1.15   The programme units constitute the reference points for the summative assessments, the recording of outcomes, and the award of credit. Teaching staff are familiar with the qualification specifications and their purpose and will reference the qualification descriptors to inform their teaching and assessment practice.

1.16   The annual programme review process will consider the delivery and assessment of the programmes. Their further development will be informed by input from tutors and from students, via various forms of feedback. The College intends to use these feedback mechanisms to provide suggestions for improvement of the programmes to the awarding organisation.

1.17   The College makes appropriate use of definitive programme information provided by the awarding organisation for the delivery and assessment of programmes in line with its delegated responsibilities. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that 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

1.18   The College's programmes are designed and approved by Pearson, who hold responsibility for ensuring that qualifications meet UK threshold academic standards. The College Management Committee determines for which programmes the College seeks approval to deliver from the awarding organisation. Where there is optionality the College will seek an indication from prospective students as to which options would be chosen in order to establish whether there is sufficient demand. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.19   The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing relevant committee minutes. The team also met with senior managers and teaching staff.

1.20   The College has in place appropriate processes for the selection, and planning for the delivery, of the higher education programmes that it seeks to offer. Staff explained that the Management Committee plays an important role in determining which programmes the College is seeking to offer and in subsequently liaising with the awarding organisation to bring forward successful approval. Management Committee minutes demonstrate discussion of programme offerings. The committee also determines the human and physical resource requirements for new programmes and teaching staff have input to programme planning.

1.21   The review team concluded that the College has structures and procedures in place that enable effective planning for, and delivery of, higher education awards. Consequently, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

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

Findings

1.22   The awarding organisation is responsible for specifying unit learning outcomes, and for confirmation of the achievement of learning outcomes and their alignment with national standards through sampling by external verifiers. It is the responsibility of the College to develop assessment tasks that allow students to demonstrate that they have met the intended learning outcomes. The College has processes in place for the approval of assessment tasks and the verification and confirmation of student achievement. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.23   The review team tested this Expectation by examining the College's assessment policies and procedures and relevant committee minutes. The team also held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff.

1.24   The College's Quality and Operations Manual details the procedures for the internal verification of assessments. College staff explained that tutors will work collaboratively to develop assessment tasks, which will be subject to internal verification. Assessment tasks will subsequently be submitted to the Teaching and Learning Committee for final approval. Tutors feel well prepared and supported for their role in devising and implementing assessments in accordance with the qualification specifications and unit learning outcomes. They will make use of the online support materials provided by the awarding organisation.

1.25   The College adheres to its procedures for the internal verification of assessments, which is confirmed in past internal verifier reports. Internal moderation of completed assessments takes place between tutors. One member of staff has formal verification qualifications. Teaching staff plan to attend professional development events on assessment hosted by the awarding organisation, and value the opportunity that this will give them to share ideas with assessors from other centres.

1.26   The College is in the process of establishing a Standardisation Committee to ensure that the standards of assessment for higher education are uniformly applied. The committee will report to the Teaching and Learning Committee. It has clear terms of reference and will be chaired by the lead verifier. All assessors will be members.

1.27   Assessment Boards will confirm final grades, which will subsequently be submitted to the awarding organisation. The College is developing a centralised tracking system to record all summative assessment decisions. Externally verified assessment decisions will be reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee. These processes are used for the current College provision and will be applied to higher education programmes once delivery and assessment have commenced.

1.28   The College recognises its responsibility for the development and delivery of assessments, which allow students to demonstrate that they have met the intended learning

outcomes set by the awarding organisation. The review team concludes that staff are enabled to do so effectively and that there are robust procedures in place to ensure that assessments will be fit for purpose, and that assessment decisions will be fair and accurately recorded. Consequently, this Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

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

1.29   The College undertakes monitoring of the academic standards of programmes in line with the requirements set by the awarding organisation. The Quality and Operations Manual clearly states the requirement for monitoring and review at module and programme level. The College has a formal policy for internal programme review, set out in the Quality Assurance Policy. The College's mechanisms for the monitoring and review of programmes complement the awarding organisation's processes of external verification and Quality Management Review. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.30   The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing the College's processes and procedures for programme monitoring and review, examining examples of module and programme review reports, and through consideration of relevant committee minutes. The team also met with senior managers and teaching staff.

1.31   The Teaching and Learning Committee has overall responsibility for monitoring all aspects of programme delivery. There is clear guidance for staff on the processes of module and programme review in the Quality and Operations Manual. Staff expressed a clear understanding of the need for monitoring and review and the processes by which this will be undertaken. Robust processes are in place for the annual review of modules using standard templates. These are currently used for level 3 provision and will also be utilised to monitor higher education provision. Additionally, the College intends to use student feedback to monitor modules during delivery, which will enable prompt action, if required.

1.32   Staff described the processes that will be implemented with regard to programme monitoring. These have been used previously to monitor higher education provision at the College. The College will produce an annual programme monitoring report drafted by the Academic Adviser. The report will include statistical information, including admission, progression and achievement data. The Teaching and Learning Committee will consider the report and follow up on any academic issues raised. Non-academic matters will be referred to the Management Committee. Arising from the annual programme monitoring process will be an action plan, which will be monitored in year.

1.33   The awarding organisation monitors its programmes through external verifiers. It undertakes an external review of assessment in the form of external standards verification to ensure that College assessment practices meet national standards. The College will use their reports to feed into its own programme monitoring and review process.

1.34   The College has processes in place that will allow it to monitor and review programmes and modules appropriately once programmes are operating. Consequently, this Expectation is met, with low risk.

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

1.35   The awarding organisation engages external and independent expertise in the development and approval of its qualifications. The College's main source of external and independent expertise in maintaining academic standards is the external verifiers appointed by its awarding organisation. Their roles and responsibilities are defined in Pearson documentation. The College expects their reports to be used as a source of evidence for other quality assurance activities. In addition, the College aspires to use independent and external expertise for staff development and the enhancement of learning opportunities for students. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.36   The review team tested this Expectation by examining the College's quality processes and relevant committee minutes. The team also met with senior and academic staff.

1.37   College staff demonstrated a clear understanding of how external verifier reports will be utilised for the monitoring of programmes and the enhancement of learning and teaching. In essence, the College will adopt the same approach for higher education programmes that it currently uses for its level 3 provision.

1.38   The College also intends to make use of independent external expertise with regard to its compliance with aspects of the Quality Code. Similarly, the College is seeking engagement with employers and their representative bodies to enhance the extent to which its higher education provision is informed by independent expertise. For example, the College intends to invite experienced and successful business people to provide advice on employability and training for students on the HND Business. However, there is a general lack of awareness of key sources of external expertise, and consequently the extent to which the College intends to use independent external expertise to maintain academic standards is somewhat limited. To meet this Expectation more fully the review team therefore recommends that the College deepens and extends its use of independent expertise to maintain academic standards.

1.39   Overall, the College has clear and firm plans for the use of independent and external expertise in maintaining academic standards. The Expectation is met and the associated 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

1.40 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. All seven of the Expectations for this judgement area are met and the associated level of risk is low in each case. Expectation A3.4 attracted a recommendation to deepen and extend the use of independent expertise to maintain academic standards. Completion of this activity will allow the provider to meet the Expectation more fully. There are no affirmations in this judgement area.

1.41 The review team concludes the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation at the provider meets UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*

Findings

2.1 The College's responsibilities for the design, development and approval of programmes are limited. The programmes the College delivers are designed and approved by Pearson. The awarding organisation's responsibility includes the setting of programme and unit aims and intended learning outcomes, credit values and unit content. The College has no input to this process. The College is, however, required to implement Pearson's procedures for the design and approval of learning and related assessment activity, which is scrutinised by internal and external verifiers. This approach would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.2 The review team tested this Expectation by examining relevant documentation including minutes and terms of reference of key academic committees, and background documents. Details were explored in meetings with senior and teaching staff.

2.3 The College has in place a process which enables due consideration of qualifications for which it aims to seek approval to deliver. Staff confirmed that additions to the academic portfolio would be discussed by the Management Committee which considers the business case as well as staff and physical resource requirements for delivery. For the Pearson provision the College agrees the optional units with Pearson and publishes its customised programme offer in a programme handbook.

2.4 Staff also confirmed that the College will fully implement Pearson's procedures for the design of assessments. It will set assessment activities at the appropriate level for the qualification, making effective use of Pearson's guidance documentation. The suitability of assessment briefs will be checked through an internal verification process.

2.5 The review team concludes that the College has effective processes in place for the development of programmes that are appropriate for the level of responsibility it has in this area. The Expectation is therefore met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

2.6   Recruitment must be undertaken in line with Pearson guidance. The College is responsible for promoting and marketing the programmes of study, selecting applicants, making offers and enrolment, and the induction and orientation of new students. The awarding organisation is responsible for maintaining a register of all students enrolled on its awards.

2.7   The College has an Admissions Policy. There is also an Admissions Appeals Policy outlining the process that can be accessed by rejected applicants. The College's Equality and Diversity Policy applies to admissions and recruitment of students. The Disability Policy sets out the College's approach to admitting students with disabilities and aims to ensure that the admission process provides equal opportunities for all suitable applicants.

2.8   An admissions statement outlining what the College aims to achieve through its admissions processes is available to prospective students on the College website. The website also gives general information about each programme including the entry requirements. An admissions team consisting of academic and administrative staff makes all admissions decisions in the College. This approach would allow Expectation B2 to be met.

2.9   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's arrangements by meeting senior, academic and professional support staff. The team also scrutinised relevant policy documents.

2.10   The College's recruitment and admissions policies and procedures are clearly laid out in the Quality and Operations Manual. They are current, mapped to the Quality Code, and meet the requirements of the awarding organisation. Applications can be made by prospective students directly to the College, via a form on the website. There is online guidance on how to apply and the process is clear and user-friendly. Entry criteria for each programme are clearly stated on the website and in the prospectus and include a requirement for proficiency in English. To ascertain the suitability and motivation to study, all applicants are interviewed using a College-devised interview template.

2.11   Although the Quality and Operations Manual contains a Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), this is not available to prospective students on the College website. As the website is the main vehicle for the application process, the review team recommends that the College makes the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy available on the website to ensure that prospective students can make fully informed application decisions.

2.12   The recruitment and admissions processes meet awarding organisation requirements and are well understood by staff. For the Diploma in Education and Training, in addition to the normal admissions requirements, prospective students will also be tested on functional skills. Staff conceded that implementing the College's Disability Policy will be challenging given the nature of the current premises. The College will, however, work with prospective students to find satisfactory solutions. The College intends to include an analysis of admissions statistics in its annual programme monitoring report.

2.13   The College has in place robust and fair policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students. Although two of the admissions-related policies are currently not easily accessible for prospective students, attracting a recommendation, overall the Expectation 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 has a vision that puts the student at the heart of its processes. The Teaching and Learning Policy sets out the College's approach to effective learning and teaching, support for learning and the creation of a suitable learning environment. The College's aim is to develop students as independent learners through a three-stage process of directional learning. The policy is supported by guidance for staff on planning for learning.

2.15   The College monitors the quality of teaching through the teaching observation scheme and the annual staff appraisal and individual performance review processes. The College's Staff Development Policy articulates the type of support the College provides to staff to facilitate their continuing professional development. This approach would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.16   In considering this Expectation, the review examined teaching, learning and related policies, strategies and processes. The team also discussed the College's approach to teaching and learning with senior, teaching and professional support staff.

2.17   The College's learning and teaching policies and strategies are comprehensive and fit for purpose. They will therefore enable the College to review and enhance the quality of learning opportunities and teaching practices once the higher education programmes have started. The Teaching and Learning Policy, together with guidance for academic staff on effective teaching and learning, forms part of the Quality and Operations Manual which is available to all staff.

2.18   The quality of higher education teaching will be monitored using a comprehensive teaching observation pro forma. Observations will be carried out by the Academic Adviser and summary outcomes reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee. Useful guidance notes for staff being observed aid their preparation for the process. Completed observation reports for the current provision demonstrate rigour in the implementation of the observation policy. The observer's findings, together with students' comments on the same session, inform feedback to the tutor. The review team considers this approach to be good practice.

2.19   The College's staff recruitment and selection procedure is clear and will allow the College to recruit suitably qualified staff. Teaching staff are expected to have appropriate qualifications and experience in the subject they will be teaching and to hold a recognised teaching qualification. Staff without a teaching qualification will be supported to obtain it. Staff CVs demonstrate that teaching staff are experienced and appropriately qualified. Recently recruited teaching staff reported efficient recruitment and helpful induction processes, and a welcoming and supportive approach by the College.

2.20   All staff will have periodic appraisals in the form of an individual performance review. The frequency will vary: academic staff are appraised after each term, administrative staff annually. Senior staff reported that individual and College-wide staff development needs will be identified through individual performance review. The College does not run an

internal staff development programme but stressed that staff will be supported in attending external training programmes by the awarding organisation, the Higher Education Academy and PSRBs. Teaching staff also value the opportunities they have to learn from each other, in part supported by their accumulated experience of teaching in a variety of other providers.

2.21   The College has appropriate systems in place for assuring, reviewing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, including processes for reviewing the quality of teaching. The review team concludes that the Expectation 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

2.22   The College has a number of processes in place to enable higher education students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Academic staff provide tutorial support to students to help them in their studies. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are used as learning support tools. The Pastoral Support Policy sets out the support available for students as well as staff roles and responsibilities for providing it. The College's Student Support and Exit Policy details the support measures the College will put in place to assist in the development of employability skills. Students with special needs are supported under the arrangements of the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.23   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's approach to student support and the provision of resources by reviewing relevant student support policies and procedures and information for students about support arrangements. The team also met with academic and professional support staff.

2.24   The College's student support mechanisms are clearly articulated in the Pastoral Support Policy and in the Quality and Operations Manual. The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy outlines the measures the College will take to support students with special needs during the assessment process. Responsibilities for student support are well understood by staff. Staff illustrated a supportive organisation that exploits the tight-knit nature of the College team. Due to the current small size of the College, students can easily approach their tutors or the member of staff responsible for student welfare.

2.25   All higher education students will be encouraged to develop and maintain Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and the College has developed a template for recording these. Plans for the current level 3 provision give details on students' goals and training plans and record a variety of other milestones, such as their induction programme, learning support activities, impact assessments of their training and an exit review. The same approach will be adopted for higher education provision.

2.26   The Student Support and Exit Policy, designed to equip students with the necessary skills so that they are able to find appropriate employment after they have completed their course, has the potential to make a valuable contribution to student support after graduation. It includes measures like CV writing and interview training.

2.27   Details about the support available are not readily available to students. While the College website lists the type of support the College will provide to students, the student handbook provides no details at all about student support services and how to access them. The review team therefore recommends that the College makes accessible in writing to students the range of academic and pastoral support available to ensure that students have all the necessary information.

2.28   The College has clear procedures for physical and human resource planning. Staff were able to articulate the College's approach to ensuring that the student learning environment is appropriate for the programmes delivered. The awarding organisation sets requirements for staffing and learning resources which the College implements. There is currently a small library for the use of students. This is being enhanced through

subscriptions to journals, to be accessible via the VLE. In addition, the College provides access to the journal collections of the awarding organisation. Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on resources and support to help them develop. This includes interim and end-of-module feedback questionnaires. Teaching staff are able to identify any additional resources required and requests can be presented directly to the Management Committee.

2.29　　Students are encouraged to make full use of information technology-based learning. A VLE that contains a variety of information relating to individual programmes and units, and more general College policies and procedures, is being developed. Tutors on current programmes use plagiarism-detection software to support the assessment process. This approach will also be adopted for higher education programmes. The College has plans to extend this facility to students to enable them to identify and understand more fully issues of potential plagiarism.

2.30　　The College's arrangements for students' support and development are appropriate for its current size and will enable it to effectively develop students' academic, personal and professional potential. The review team concludes that the Expectation 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

2.31   The College places an emphasis on engaging with its students to enhance their learning experience. Student representatives are full members of the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the College engages all students in the enhancement of their educational experience through a variety of feedback and evaluation questionnaires. Higher education cohorts are anticipated to be small. Consequently, there will be short lines of communication which will allow ready, informal means of student engagement. The overall approach would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.32   The review team tested this Expectation through the review of relevant committee minutes and student feedback mechanisms and in meetings with senior and academic staff.

2.33   Minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee confirm that current student representatives regularly attend the meetings and make use of the opportunities to provide feedback to the College. The College intends for student representation to grow as student numbers increase in line with a greater number of programmes, with each cohort having a representative on the committee.

2.34   The terms of reference for the Teaching and Learning Committee outline its role in monitoring student feedback. Student feedback is sought formally through student surveys at the conclusion of each unit using a College-devised template. Such feedback is used to inform module and programme review. This is evident from the module review reports and the annual programme monitoring report. Students also have the opportunity to provide feedback on other activities, processes and resources, such as the website, guest speaker visits and the quality of teaching, as part of the teaching observation process. The College is considering further mechanisms by which to communicate and engage with its student body, such as a staff-student meeting and a 'You Said - We Did' newsletter.

2.35   Data from student feedback is collated by the Registrar and evaluated by the Academic Adviser, for subsequent use in course monitoring and review. Staff gave examples of how previous student feedback had been used to enhance learning resources.

2.36   Overall, the review team concludes that the College takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The mechanisms in place to facilitate this are appropriate for the current size of the College. Therefore, the Expectation is met and 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

2.37   The assessment of learning outcomes for all units is delegated to the College. This entails the responsibility for the design of assessment tasks in compliance with the awarding organisation's requirements, first marking of student work, moderation of assessment decisions and giving feedback to students on their work. The awarding organisation is responsible for setting the learning outcomes and assessment criteria attached to each outcome and the provision of generic grade descriptors that must be contextualised to the assessments set by the College. The awarding organisation has oversight of the assessment process through annual visits of their external examiners, who monitor the assessments the College sets to ensure that they are appropriate and at the national standard, that the standard of student work is appropriate to the grade awarded, and that appropriate feedback is given to students.

2.38   The College's Teaching and Learning Policy sets out the general principles for learning, teaching and assessment at the College. The Assessment Policy outlines the assessment processes, including those for internal verification and feedback to students. The College recognises the need to adapt processes according to the awarding organisation's requirements. The Quality and Operations Manual contains further guidance on the design of assessment briefs. A range of ancillary policies such as the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, which sets out the principles of assessment support for students with special needs and consideration of extenuating circumstances, the Plagiarism Policy, the Policy on Tracking and Monitoring Academic Progress and the examination regulations also support the assessment process.

2.39   Assessment decisions are considered by an Assessment Board and assessment decisions are entered into the student tracking system. The College is planning the introduction of a Standardisation Committee to ensure uniformity in carrying out assessment and maintenance of assessment standards. The programme handbook provides information on assessment methods and grading and the generic student handbook contains information on the avoidance of academic misconduct. The College's VLE is in the process of being populated with a range of assessment information and assessment briefs. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.40   The review team tested the Expectation by examining relevant assessment policies and procedures as well as assessment-related information available to students and staff. The team also met with senior, academic and professional support staff.

2.41   The College's policies and procedures relating to the assessment and the support of students in the assessment process are clear, comprehensive and meet the requirements of the awarding organisation. The College also has in place a policy for the recognition of prior learning to respond to Accreditation of Prior Learning requests at the admissions stage, which aligns with the awarding organisation's requirements. As no higher education programmes are operational yet, the implementation of assessment policies and procedures could not be assessed.

2.42   The roles and responsibilities in the assessment process are well understood by staff. Staff demonstrated awareness of the awarding organisation's requirements and were able to articulate clearly the processes for assessment setting, marking and moderation that will be employed in the assessment of higher education programmes. The development of assessments, their scheduling and delivery is the responsibility of tutors, who will work collaboratively with their peers and will use the awarding organisation's guidance on assessment. Tutors will prepare schemes of work that ensure that assessments are appropriately timed and not bunched. The Quality and Operations Manual contains helpful guidance for staff on how to develop effective assessment briefs. Awarding organisation assessment plans that specify the unit to be assessed, the assessment title, learning outcomes and assessment criteria, handout date and internal and external verification dates will be used to monitor the assessment process.

2.43   Some staff hold formal assessor qualifications and the College confirms that tutors who do not will be supported to acquire them. The College has a lead internal verifier who meets the qualification criteria of the awarding organisation. To maintain the quality of assessment standards and to ensure that the standards of assessment are uniformly applied the College has developed terms of reference for a Standardisation Committee.
The committee will be chaired by the lead internal verifier and all assessors are members. A standardisation exercise will be carried out at least once a year. Staff envisage that this practice, as well as the opportunity to attend assessment-related staff development events at the awarding organisation, will help to share best practice.

2.44   The College has in place policies, procedures and information for students on academic misconduct. However, these do not include statements on the penalties that might be imposed should academic misconduct be proven. From discussions with tutors and senior managers it was evident that the College had not yet clarified its stance on such penalties. The review team therefore recommends that the College clarifies and articulates the range of penalties for academic misconduct.

2.45   The College policy on special considerations recognises that at times students may have extenuating circumstances which may impact on their performance in assessment. However, the mechanisms by which this policy is brought to the attention of students and by which students might make a claim for such extenuating circumstances was not clear. The student and programme handbooks do not provide any guidance to students on the grounds on which extenuating circumstances might be claimed, nor on the process for doing so. Additionally, staff whom the team met were not clear in their articulation of how these processes would operate in practice. Consequently, the review team recommends that the College clarifies and articulates the processes by which extenuating circumstances would be considered and approved.

2.46   The College has key policies and structures in place that will allow it to meet its responsibilities for assessment as delegated by the awarding organisation. Staff are enabled to perform their assessment tasks effectively. While the procedures with regard to assessment are adequate, the clarity of policies on extenuating circumstances and the penalties for academic misconduct should be enhanced. As a consequence, this Expectation is met, with a moderate risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.47   The College has limited responsibilities for external examining. Pearson is responsible for defining the role, nomination, training and recognition of the work of its external verifiers, whereas the College is primarily responsible for putting into effect Pearson's recommendations and making effective use of their reports in quality assurance and enhancement. The College's Teaching and Learning Committee considers all external verifier reports and recommendations are addressed via the annual programme monitoring process. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.48   The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing relevant committee minutes and programme monitoring action plans. The team also met with senior and academic staff.

2.49   There are sound mechanisms in place to receive and to consider external verifier reports from the awarding organisation. Minutes of Teaching and Learning Committee confirm that the committee considers the external verifier reports for the College's current level 3 provision. Staff confirmed that the committee will also review reports for higher education provision once they become available. Equally, external verifier reports will form part of the annual programme monitoring process and development of an action plan, which, among other matters, will respond to the recommendations from external verifier reports. A previous annual programme monitoring report demonstrated the process in action.

2.50   As members of the Teaching and Learning Committee, student representatives will have access to external verifier reports. The College is planning to place redacted versions of reports in the relevant sections of the VLE and make them accessible for all students.

2.51   Given its limited responsibilities, the College has in place adequate processes for the receipt of, and response to, external verifiers' reports. The Expectation is met, with low risk.

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

2.52   The awarding organisation has ultimate responsibility for the monitoring and periodic review of the programmes. Monitoring occurs through the annual Quality Management Review process. The College has its own processes and procedures for programme monitoring, which complement those of the awarding organisation.

2.53   The Quality and Operations Manual details the requirements for the monitoring of programmes and modules. Annual monitoring of each programme and module is conducted using standardised templates. The programme monitoring report evaluates the operation of programmes during the past year. Annual monitoring also aims to identify good practice and areas for development. The programme annual monitoring report gives rise to an action plan for implementation in the following year. Module evaluation reports evaluate teaching, learning and assessment, and learning resources. They contain a summary of student feedback and suggestions or actions for further improvement. Module evaluation reports feed into annual programme monitoring.

2.54   The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for monitoring all aspects of programme delivery. It considers the annual programme monitoring and module evaluation reports. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.55   The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing the College's procedures for the monitoring of programmes and modules, scrutinising relevant reports and committee minutes, and through meetings with senior and academic staff.

2.56   The annual programme monitoring process is based on input from students, tutors and externals and is informed by quantitative data. The overarching College Annual Monitoring and Quality Control Report provides the basis for programme monitoring and review at College level. The 2015 report seen by the review team provides a sound overview of programme activity and quality. The resulting action plan builds on strengths and identifies areas for development to be taken forward in the subsequent academic year. Module review reports for current provision are detailed and provide a solid overview of teaching, learning and assessment based on feedback received from students. The same reporting principles will be adopted for the higher education provision.

2.57   Staff clearly articulated the responsibilities for programme monitoring. Data related to student enrolment, retention, achievement and feedback will be collated by the College Registrar and evaluated by the Academic Adviser, who drafts the programme monitoring report that is considered by the Teaching and Learning Committee. The report and the data that feeds into it will consider a wide range of matters, both academic and non-academic. Academic issues will be responded to by the Teaching and Learning Committee, while non-academic matters will be dealt with by the Management Committee.

2.58   The College does not have any processes in place for the periodic review of programmes. The review team recognises that the periodic review of programmes is ultimately the responsibility of the awarding organisation; however, the College should play a part in this given the potential for courses to evolve over time and thus to drift away from the original mission of the programme and its delivery at the College. The review team therefore

recommends that the College develops a process for the internal periodic review of the programmes it delivers.

2.59   Overall, the College has in place sound processes for the annual monitoring and review of its provision and as a result this Expectation is met, with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.60   The Quality and Operations Manual details the College's policy and procedures on complaints and appeals. Further information for students is provided in the student handbook. The complaints procedure is also available on the College website. This approach would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.61   The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing the College's student complaints and academic appeals procedures and relevant guidance to staff and students. The team also met with senior, academic and professional support staff.

2.62   The Quality and Operations Manual and the Appeals Process clearly set out the approach for the receipt and management of complaints and appeals. The documents also provide clear and appropriate timescales for the consideration of appeals and complaints. The complaints and appeals procedures are multi-stage processes which propose that matters are dealt with locally, where possible, but offer the complainant or appellant the opportunity to escalate their case where necessary. Complaints and appeals panels will be established according to the relevant procedures. However, neither of these processes, nor the information for students, provides guidance on recourse to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, and College managers were not fully appreciative of the role of this body.

2.63   The procedures detail the responsibilities for the consideration of appeals and complaints and staff explained that academic appeals would be considered by the Teaching and Learning Committee, with subsequent recourse to the Management Committee and ultimately to the College Principal. Complaints would be referred to the Management Committee and, where necessary, to the College Principal. Staff gave assurances that where the potential for conflicts of interests might arise due to the small number of current staff fulfilling multiple roles, the College would ensure that decision making at each stage would be undertaken by individuals unconnected to the case, and that external participation would be sought to ensure impartial consideration of the matter and in subsequent decision making.

2.64   As the College has not had any complaints and academic appeals thus far, the procedures have not yet been tested. The College intends to monitor the number of complaints as part of the annual programme monitoring process.

2.65   Overall, the College's processes and procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints provide a sound basis for managing these matters. Consequently, this Expectation is met, with low risk.

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

2.66   The College stated that its higher education programmes will include elements of work experience and placements. The College will be working with employers to facilitate them and thus learning opportunities will be delivered through arrangements with organisations other than the awarding organisation. The College has developed processes to ensure that arrangements with employers are fit for purpose and managed effectively. This approach would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.67   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's approach to delivering learning opportunities with other organisations by considering documentation relating to agreements with employers and placement providers. The team also held meetings with senior staff and with academic and professional support staff.

2.68   The College's approach to assuring that work placement and work experience activities are suitable and safe for students, and meet the intended learning outcomes, are sound. To ensure safe learning for students, the College has developed a risk assessment document which will be used to assess each activity. This document comprehensively covers all aspects of risk assessment and health and safety. The College has also developed a template for agreements between the College and the work placement or work experience provider. It describes the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in a placement, including students, and will be signed by the placement provider and the College. As no higher education programmes are yet operational, the implementation of the procedures could not be assessed.

2.69   Staff were able to explain in full the process for setting up and monitoring placements; however, the procedures are not articulated in the Quality and Operations Manual or in any other repository of policies and procedures. Consequently, the team recommends that the College clarifies and articulates the procedure for the implementation and monitoring of placement learning.

2.70   Notwithstanding the above recommendation, the team considers that the College's arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with other organisations are sound. The review team concludes that the Expectation 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

The College does not offer research degrees and therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

Expectation: Not applicable
Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.72   Of the eleven Expectations in this judgement area, 10 Expectations are applicable to the College, all of which are met. Expectation B11 is not applicable as the College does not offer research degrees. One Expectation is judged to have a moderate risk. This is reflected in the two recommendations made by the review team, which concern the clarification and articulation of the range of penalties for academic misconduct and processes by which extenuating circumstances would be considered and approved (Expectation B6).

2.73   There are four recommendations in this judgement area for Expectations that have been met with a low risk level, namely the development of a process for the periodic review of programmes (Expectation B8), making the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy available on the website (Expectation B2), making accessible in writing to students the range of academic and pastoral support available (Expectation B4), and the clarification and articulation of the procedure for the implementation and monitoring of placement learning (Expectation B10).

2.74   The review team identified one feature of good practice in this judgement area with regards to the use of teaching observers' and students' comments on the same session to inform feedback to the tutor (Expectation B3).

2.75   The review team notes that all Expectations in this judgement area are met. All but one of the Expectations have a low risk rating. The review team therefore concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the provider 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 range of information about its higher education provision to students, staff and external stakeholders and in a variety of ways, including print and digital formats on internal and externally facing websites. The College's Public Information Policy outlines the responsibilities for ensuring the accuracy of the information published. The Management Committee maintains oversight of all information produced by the College. The College's Updating Policy specifies the intervals for reviewing and updating all types of documents and responsibilities for doing so. The design of the process would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.2 The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing the quality procedures for managing information and a range of published information in different formats. The team also discussed the effectiveness of the College's practices and procedures for the publication of information with senior, academic and professional support staff.

3.3 The College website is accessible and clear and a useful information resource for prospective students. It provides accurate information about the College, its programmes, the application process and student support. It also hosts the College's policies on student complaints, attendance and academic misconduct. The website does not signpost the College's policy for the recognition of prior learning (see Expectation B2). The Academic Adviser conducts detailed biannual checks of the website and makes recommendations for improvements to the Management Committee. The actual changes required are enacted by the Registrar, who also has responsibility for the VLE. The College also invites feedback on the website from students through a questionnaire.

3.4 The VLE is still under development but it is evident that it will be a comprehensive and useful support tool for students' learning. It will eventually contain unit details and learning outcomes, lesson plans and schemes of work, lecture slides, assessment briefs and assessment feedback, the facility for students to submit assessments, plagiarism-detection software, and general programme information such as the timetable and assignment submission dates for all programmes. Student module questionnaires will also be accessible through the VLE. The responsibility to produce programme-specific information lies with the tutors. The Registrar facilitates the uploading of documents.

3.5 The process for the management of public information is well understood by staff. The author of a document or website content is responsible for cross-checking its accuracy with a colleague with the appropriate expertise. The agreed copy is forwarded to the Academic Adviser, who is responsible for producing the final copy that goes to the Principal and the Management Committee for approval and to the Registrar for implementation. Minutes of the Management Committee confirm that it fulfils its role for the approval of published information.

3.6 The College's Quality and Operations Manual is comprehensive and contains policies and procedures for all areas of operation. It is maintained by the Academic Adviser

and policies are reviewed and updated annually, or earlier if necessary. Staff are familiar with its content and value it as a source of information.

3.7 The College publishes a generic student handbook and programme-specific handbooks for each programme. Their content and currency is to be reviewed after each term. The student handbook contains key student-facing policies and information about learning resources, whereas the programme handbooks provide information about the course structure, delivery and assessment. Neither handbook specifies the various forms of support available to students (see Expectation B4).

3.8 Overall, the information published by the College is fit for purpose, accurate and trustworthy. Information is monitored and updated regularly. Consequently, 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

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

3.10   Expectation C is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations, affirmations or good practice in this judgement area.

3.11   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the provider 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 has a Strategy for the Enhancement of Student Learning Opportunities that sets out the College's approach to enhancement. The strategy places an emphasis on mechanisms such as student feedback, data sources, internal monitoring reports, external verifier reports, and the sharing of good practice as vehicles for the identification of enhancements to the provision. The College notes the importance of students as a driver for enhancement and wishes to develop a culture wherein students feel comfortable to approach staff with their views on the provision.

4.2   The Teaching and Learning Committee oversees and monitors institutional and programme-related enhancement activities. The College has identified several institutional enhancement priorities. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3   The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing relevant strategies, quality processes and procedures, quality monitoring reports and committee minutes. The team also met with senior, academic and professional support staff.

4.4   The College's ethos is to work in partnership with students on the enhancement of learning and teaching and the student experience. The College has created structures that will enable it to identify and monitor enhancements systematically at programme and institutional levels. It has recently introduced enhancement as a standing agenda item for the Teaching and Learning Committee. Student representatives are members of the committee and have the opportunity to contribute to the discussions. This will enable dialogue with students about enhancement at institutional level.

4.5   The College seeks to develop a culture of continuous improvement with a particular emphasis on student feedback. At programme level, higher education students will be invited to provide feedback about their experience at module level. The College currently uses this approach with its level 3 students to good effect. Other feedback mechanisms are being actively considered. Staff gave examples of enhancements that have taken place with regard to the learning environment and learning resources in response to student feedback.

4.6   The College has identified the development of employability skills, the further embedding of information learning technology, and the development of a teaching and learning strategy that systematically develops students into independent learners as current institutional enhancement priorities for its provision. With regard to employability skills the College plans to make use of external expertise to facilitate this.

4.7   Due to the very small teaching staff base the sharing of good practice to enhance learning and teaching is largely informal through team teaching. Good practice will also be identified through teaching observation and highlighted in the annual programme monitoring report. This approach is currently used for the College's level 3 provision and will also be employed for its higher education provision.

4.8   The College recognises the importance of taking a holistic and strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities and has taken steps at College level to develop processes to allow it to do so. The scale of the planned higher education provision will be such that its approach to enhancement will allow it to improve the quality of learning

opportunities. The Expectation is met, with a low risk.

Expectation: **Met**
Level of risk: **Low**

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.10   The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low. There are no recommendations, affirmations or good practice in this judgement area.

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

Glossary

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

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

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

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

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