

# University of Chichester

**November 2007**

## **Annex to the report**

### **Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Outcomes of the institutional audit	3
Institutional approach to quality enhancement	3
Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students	3
Published information	3
Features of good practice	3
Recommendations for action	4
<b>Section 1: Introduction and background</b>	<b>4</b>
The institution and its mission	4
The information base for the audit	5
Developments since the last audit	5
Institutional framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities	7
<b>Section 2: Institutional management of academic standards</b>	<b>9</b>
Approval, monitoring and review of award standards	9
External examiners	13
Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points	14
Assessment policies and regulations	15
Management information - statistics	16
<b>Section 3: Institutional management of learning opportunities</b>	<b>16</b>
Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points	16
Approval, monitoring and review of programmes	16
Management information - feedback from students	17
Role of students in quality assurance	17
Links between research or scholarly activity and learning opportunities	18
Other modes of study	19
Resources for learning	19
Admissions policy	21

Student support	22
Staff support (including staff development)	23
<b>Section 4: Institutional approach to quality enhancement</b>	<b>24</b>
Management information - quality enhancement	24
Good practice	25
Staff development and reward	25
<b>Section 5: Collaborative arrangements</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Section 6: Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Section 7: Published information</b>	<b>31</b>

## Introduction

A team of auditors from the Quality Assurance for Higher Education (QAA) visited the University of Chichester from 5 to 9 November 2007 to carry out an institutional audit. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the learning opportunities available to students and on the academic standards of the awards that the University offers.

### Outcomes of the institutional audit

As a result of its investigations, the audit team's view of the University is that:

- confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards
- confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

### Institutional approach to quality enhancement

Overall, the audit team found that the University was committed to enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities, and is taking steps to promote this approach through its quality procedures. However, there is scope for the development of a more formal and strategic approach at the institutional level.

### Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

The audit team concluded that the University's arrangements for its postgraduate research students met the expectations of the *Code of practice for assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice), Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes*.

### Published information

The audit team concluded that reliance could reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the institution published about its educational provision and the standards of its awards, with the exception of information on joint and combined degree programmes where the award requirements as intended by the University are generally not clearly identified.

### Features of good practice

The audit team identified the following areas of good practice:

- the use made by the University of the external examiner system in securing the standards of its awards (paragraph 59)
- the full engagement with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 67)
- the role of the external adviser to the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee in supporting the development of collaborative provision (paragraph 142)
- the 'Probationer MPhil' scheme designed to prepare students for a higher degree programme (paragraph 165)

## Recommendations for action

The audit team recommends that the University consider further action in some areas.

Recommendations for action that the audit team considers advisable:

- to review the role of the external adviser in the programme approval process to ensure that there is appropriate impartial and critical scrutiny, including with respect to resources for learning (paragraphs 34 and 106)
- to ensure that periodic review takes place every five years in line with the University's requirements (paragraph 52)
- to review the definition and coherence of joint and combined honours programmes (paragraphs 54, 55 and 107)
- to review the approval and periodic review processes for programmes that involve significant amounts of flexible and/or distributed learning to ensure appropriate specialist scrutiny (paragraph 104)
- to ensure that the University's transcripts or award certificates indicate the location of study in respect of collaborative partners (paragraph 152)
- to review procedures for the registration of students on collaborative programmes in order to ensure that they have timely access to learning resources (paragraph 155).

Recommendations for action that the audit team considers desirable:

- to ensure that annual monitoring includes specific consideration of learning resources (paragraph 108)
- to review the institutional processes for the oversight of quality enhancement and the dissemination of good practice (paragraphs 135, 136 and 138)
- to ensure that postgraduate research students are given appropriate training prior to undertaking a teaching role (paragraph 175).

## Section 1: Introduction and background

### The institution and its mission

1 The University of Chichester (the University) was granted University title by the Privy Council in October 2005 after gaining degree awarding powers in 1999 as the University College Chichester. The University is located on two sites, the Bishop Otter Campus, located in Chichester, and the Bognor Regis Campus. The Briefing Paper described the University as one of the smallest universities in the country.

2 In the academic year 2006-07 there were a total of 5,104 students, equivalent to 4,275 full-time students. Of these, 1,658 were part-time and 3,446 were full-time. Nearly 1,000 of the part-time students are registered on taught master's programmes. At the time of the audit, there were 68 part-time and 12 full-time postgraduate students on research programmes at Chichester, under an accreditation agreement with the University of Southampton. The University has a small collaborative provision, currently standing at approximately 42 full-time and 90 part-time students registered for University of Chichester awards. The University also collaborates with the University of Brighton to deliver a Certificate in Policing in Communities (101 students based at the Bognor Regis Campus). The University has two programmes delivered overseas: a diploma in Practical English Teaching (DipPET) and an MA in TESOL. Both of these are delivered in Tokyo, in partnership with the International Diploma Council to teachers of English. Its future plans for any expansion in collaborative provision are related to its work with other higher education institutions regionally as a member of two Lifelong Learning Networks.

3 At the time of the audit, the University was structured into six academic schools: Cultural Studies; Physical Education; Social Studies; Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences; Teacher Education; and Visual and Performing Arts.

4 In April 2007, a new Vice-Chancellor, Dr Robin Baker, took up office. He is directing a strategic review which will result in a new corporate plan. This will come into operation from September 2008.

5 The Vision, Mission and Values of the University are set out in the existing Corporate Plan (2005-09). The University Mission Statement is as follows: 'The University is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in which individuals exceed their expectations, strive to achieve academic excellence in teaching and scholarship, and are committed to lifelong learning and an enhanced contribution to society'. The Corporate Plan also sets out the 'five principal objectives of the University' as being to:

- develop flexible and innovative educational programmes informed by contemporary scholarship and research
- provide an environment to enable students to achieve their educational goals
- extend higher educational opportunities within the region
- enrich the local communities of the arts, business, culture, sport, leisure and public services
- embrace organisational procedures that support institutional excellence.

### **The information base for the audit**

6 The University provided the audit team with an institutional briefing paper (the Briefing Paper) and supporting documentation, including material related to the sampling trails selected by the team. The Briefing Paper contained an index of supplementary documentation, also available electronically, directing auditors to sources of evidence to illustrate the institution's approach to managing the security of the academic standards of awards and the quality of its educational provision. The team also had access to hard copies of all documents referred to in the Briefing Paper. The team was also given access to the University's intranet site.

7 The Students' Union produced a student written submission setting out the students' views on the accuracy of information provided to them, the experience of students as learners and their role in quality management. The audit team is grateful for the students' engagement with the audit process.

8 In addition, the audit team had access to the report of the previous QAA Institutional Audit (2003), the Review of Research Degree Programmes (July 2006) and reports of reviews at subject level in the six years prior to the audit.

### **Developments since the last audit**

9 The previous institutional audit in February 2003 resulted in an overall judgement of broad confidence in the soundness of University College Chichester's current management of the quality of its programmes, other than its collaborative provision, where more limited confidence was felt to be justified. The findings also confirmed broad confidence in the soundness of the University College's future management of the quality of its programmes and that once weaknesses in the University College's current management of collaborative provision had been addressed, it would be possible for there to be broad confidence in that area for the future. The report highlighted the urgency for timely action to be taken to identify and address weaknesses in the management of such provision.

10 The report noted the following areas of good practice:

- the provision of the Academic Standards Committee Annual Report to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors
- the provision of 'probationer MPhil' arrangements sessions for intending higher degree research students
- appointment, induction and advisory arrangements for external examiners
- the University College's involvement of students in its quality management arrangements through their representatives at institutional level
- module evaluation and reporting arrangements to students in some programmes
- the engagement of some subjects with regional bodies
- the University College's approach to, and support for, part-time staff and research students who teach.

11 There were three recommendations that the audit team recommended that the University College should take action on without delay. These were:

- to establish and implement operational management arrangements for its collaborative provision
- to ensure adherence to its own Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision (the University College's Code); develop a clear and rigorous framework for the management of associated HND and degree level work with its collaborative partners, particularly in relation to assessment
- to establish the responsibilities of its schools for collaborative provision.

12 The University College was also advised to:

- take advantage of its recent restructuring and, in particular, the establishment of schools to review and reflect critically on the fitness for purpose of its current framework for managing the quality of its educational provision and the academic standards of its awards
- ensure that conditions attached to the approval of programmes are met in a timely manner
- encourage partner institutions to make available to their staff the development opportunities it provides
- define reporting arrangements for link and liaison tutors in collaborative provision.

13 The audit team also found a number of matters where it recommended that the University College might benefit from further action:

- taking steps to recognise, capture and share instances of good practice and enhancement across the full range of its provision
- reviewing the balance of responsibilities of heads of schools
- making systematic arrangements to gather feedback from employers on their needs.

14 In responding to the 2003 audit report, the University College provided a progress report in September 2004 that explained in detail actions taken in response to all of the recommendations and findings of the report. It also responded appropriately to the detailed advice offered by the audit team in the body of the report. It included points made in relation to the discipline audit trails in music, animal sciences (collaborative provision) and sports studies/science. This progress report was accepted by QAA and signed off by the QAA Board, completing the audit.

15 The University had taken immediate action in relation to the collaborative programmes in animal management and equine studies, which were subsequently closed, but enabling existing students to complete their programmes. The University also acknowledged the need to develop a clear and rigorous framework for the management of collaborative provision and had established a centre for collaborative programmes, along with a range of new procedures to ensure effective operational management of collaborative provision. This is embodied in the Academic Framework for Collaborative Programmes Handbook, much of which now appears in the Quality Handbook. Other external review reports confirmed that the actions taken to address the issues raised in 2003 have succeeded in establishing an effective framework through which to deliver collaborative provision.

16 At the time of the last audit, the University was undertaking a review of its quality assurance procedures and the advice contained in the 2003 audit report supported this work. New systems have been introduced in response to the recommendations of the report and included in the Quality Handbook. The revised processes were considered effective by the current audit team, in being less cumbersome and appropriately devolved to school level.

17 The present audit team concluded that the University had given careful consideration and responded appropriately to the issues emerging from the institutional audit of 2003 and that they had fully implemented the action plan so that the management of collaborative provision was secure, as reflected in the findings of the current audit.

### **Institutional framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities**

18 The Academic Board, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, has delegated responsibility from the Board of Governors for the operational management of academic standards and the quality of awards. While the Board of Governors has overall strategic responsibility, the Academic Board is the final decision-making body for all issues relating to the academic provision of the University. Responsibilities of the Academic Board include the appointment of external examiners, approval of new programmes, and the review and revision of the Academic Regulations. The Academic Board monitors its subordinate committees by receiving their formal minutes and periodic reports on significant parts of their work.

19 The responsibility for operating the systems for the assurance of academic standards and quality is delegated to the Academic Standards Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Its work is supported by the Academic Standards Unit. The Academic Standards Committee submits an annual report to the Academic Board and Board of Governors whose purpose is to assure that, inter alia, 'the appropriate academic standards were achieved by students gaining University of Chichester Awards', and 'the quality of the learning environment was such that it supported the students in the achievement of standards'. Since 2004, two school quality committees have operated, each with three schools attached, chaired in rotation by the deputy heads of school and reporting to the Academic Standards Committee. The Briefing Paper reported that deputy heads of School, rather than the heads of school, chair the school quality committees as an element 'in broadening the ownership of quality procedures' and in order to 'raise the profile of quality procedures at School level'. The heads of school are involved in quality matters as members of the Academic Management Team and the Academic Board. The role of the quality officers as members of the school quality committees is, in part, to ensure consistency of practice across the University. The Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, constitutes the third subordinate committee reporting to the Academic Standards Committee. Quality Officers from the Academic Standards Unit are assigned to the School quality committees and the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee, as well as to the postgraduate research provision.

20 Overall, the devolution has resulted in the schools exerting greater ownership of key quality processes. The school quality committees and the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee manage the annual monitoring process, nominate external examiners and external advisers for programme approval and periodic review and take responsibility for procedures for minor changes to programmes.

21 There is a learning and teaching committee chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor. The committee membership includes the Widening Participation Manager, the Head of Centre for Learning and Teaching, the Director of Information Services and the Disability and Academic Skills Coordinator. It also includes two elected representatives from each school and four students nominated by the Students' Union. This committee is responsible to the Academic Board for the appropriateness of the learning and teaching environment and for the development and monitoring of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. It also advises another of the Academic Board committees, the Staff Development Committee, on appropriate staff development for learning and teaching. It receives reports from the Centre for Learning and Teaching, and supports schools in implementing the peer-observation system.

22 The Student Support Services Committee reports to the Academic Board and has the responsibility to consider support for students in its widest sense. It is a forum for enhancements to student support to be considered prior to further investment of resources in detailed development. The Information Services Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Board, chaired by the Director of Information Services, and responsible for the development and monitoring of the Information Strategy.

23 There is also a research and scholarship committee, reporting to the Academic Board. It is chaired by the Director of Research and coordinates the work of the School Research and Scholarship Groups.

24 Ethical issues in relation to research programmes are considered by the Academic Board's Ethics Committee. School research groups conduct an initial scrutiny of ethics pro formas, and all proposals from postgraduate research students are scrutinised by the Ethics Committee.

25 On the management side, there is a Vice-Chancellor's Group, consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Finance Director, Head of Planning and the Clerk to the Governors, which meets weekly. A senior management group also exists, which meets monthly, consisting of the Vice-Chancellor's Group plus some non-academic heads and the Director of Research. Both these groups are chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. Academic provision is managed by the Academic Management Team, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and this group meets fortnightly and reports to the Senior Management Group and the Academic Board.

26 There are six academic schools each with a head, deputy head and principal lecturer (learning and teaching). Schools are managed through a school management team and also have school research and scholarship groups.

27 The systems and procedures for the management of quality and standards were introduced in September 2004 to 2006 and codified in a new quality handbook in September 2006.

28 Evidence derived from documents and discussions with the staff indicated to the audit team that the committee structure and new quality assurance procedures were effective in the management of quality and standards. There was evidence of good levels of attendance at committees and groups and of full and effective discussions. The membership structures coupled with the size of the institution enabled effective linkages between decisions made through the deliberative structures and implementation through the executive structure.



## Section 2: Institutional management of academic standards

### Approval, monitoring and review of award standards

#### Programme approval

29 Along with other procedures, this was reviewed in 2004 with the aim of 'reducing bureaucracy, increasing ownership and supporting the enhancement of programmes'. A key feature of the revised programme approval process is that the 'validation' event has been replaced by the process of 'approval'.

30 New programmes are formally approved by the Academic Board, though responsibility for the process lies with the Academic Standards Committee. In its quality handbook the University stated that the process 'assures the Board that its programmes meet all relevant external and internal benchmarks and requirements for academic standards and quality'.

31 Proposals for new programmes are sponsored by the host school and agreed by the Senior Management Group, which has the responsibility of developing the strategic direction of the University. The Senior Management Group checks the fit of the proposal with the Corporate Plan and, through the Planning Group, conducts a resource scheduling exercise to ensure that adequate resources are available and that the University's support services can provide the required support for students. The Academic Standards Committee then assigns an external adviser to work with the programme development team. External advisers are appointed using the same procedures for external examiners, involving nomination by the relevant School quality committee and, via the Academic Standards Committee, final approval by the Academic Board. The audit team considered the appointment procedure of external advisers to be robust. The schedule for approval is produced by the School Quality Officer.

32 The approval process focuses on the development of the student programme handbook, to a university template. The focus on the student programme handbook is a deliberate policy reflecting the view of the Academic Board that the explanation of the programme provided for students should be sufficiently full and detailed to meet the requirements of all stakeholders. The Briefing Paper described the process as putting 'the student experience at the heart of the approval process'. The handbook includes a programme specification.

33 The Academic Standards Committee appoints an approval panel, which includes the external adviser, to receive the student programme handbook and enter into an iterative dialogue with the development team. Written comments by panel members on the proposed student handbook are collated at a clarification meeting between the approval panel and the development team. At the meeting the panel may agree recommendations for amendments prior to approval, or may extend the development period, or may reject the programme. When all recommendations have been met and signed off by the chair of the panel, the Academic Standards Committee reports to the Academic Board that it may approve the programme. Programmes are approved indefinitely, subject to positive annual monitoring and periodic review.

34 The University has developed a method that involves support from external specialists that runs from the initial design of the new programme through to the final approval. During the audit, the audit team heard that the external adviser's role is initially to assist the programme team in the development of the new programme, but then becomes evaluative as the external adviser becomes a member of the panel that signals approval or otherwise. Although the external adviser may not always attend the clarification meeting, the team came to the view that the dual remits of developer and assessor embodied in the role of the external adviser has the potential to challenge the impartiality of the external adviser in making judgements on proposed programmes. The team wishes to state that there was no evidence of compromise but nevertheless the team advises the University to review the role of the external adviser in the programme approval process, to ensure that there is appropriate impartial and critical scrutiny.

35 The audit team discussed the new procedure for programme approval with groups of staff and were informed that it was welcomed as an improvement over the previous method. Academic Standards Committee had monitored the implementation of the new procedures in an incremental fashion but it had yet to undertake a formal systematic review.

### **Minor change to programmes**

36 In its quality handbook, the University described minor change as 'any change to the content or delivery of a programme, from that agreed in the Student Programme Handbook at Approval, that does not involve alteration to the intended learning outcomes of the programme (as they appear in the Programme Specification)' and views minor change 'as a natural part of the development of the programme'.

37 Minor change is carried out, with the support of the relevant School Management Team, the Programme Board and the external examiner, through the School quality committees or the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee and is reported through the Academic Standards Committee to the Academic Board. Minor change can also be implemented through the annual monitoring procedures.

38 Programmes may carry out changes to up to 25 per cent of programme content, including delivery method and assessment, through the minor change process. Greater levels of change trigger a re-approval process. School quality committees and the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee will take advice from School quality officers and, if necessary, the Head of the Academic Standards Unit in determining whether a proposal falls within the spirit of the provisions for minor change. The ultimate arbiter is the chair of the Academic Standards Committee. On agreement to the change, the School Quality Officer ensures that the student programme handbook is updated. There was not a consensus among the staff the audit team met as to the definition of 25 per cent of a programme; however, the Head of the Academic Standards Unit and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor have a role in determining whether a particular set of proposals constitutes a minor change or whether they should prompt a review or revalidation.

39 The audit team was satisfied that the minor change process was useful in that it delegated authority to the School Quality Committee for change that would otherwise result in complicated and drawn-out revalidations. The team also acknowledged the value in trying to specify limits on minor change. However, the team encourages the University in any review of its procedures to strengthen the definition of the scope of minor change so that staff can be sure of what falls within or outside the procedure.

### **Annual monitoring**

40 The school quality committees and the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee manage the annual monitoring process, serviced by the School Quality Officer. This process includes the appointment and chairing of panels and the receipt of action plans from the schools in response to recommendations. Annual monitoring events can allow minor changes to be agreed or recommend programme re-approval through the School Quality Committee.

41 The School Quality Committee appoints a chair and panel who meet with the programme team in the first semester to discuss their experience of delivering the programme in the previous academic year. The panel includes a member from a school that is not connected with the programme and, where possible, panels consider programmes in cognate groups, though due consideration is given to each programme. Through the process of discussion, the panel produces a report that includes programme action points subsequently submitted to the School Management Team, which then proposes an action plan. This action plan is agreed by the relevant school quality committee or Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee and reported to the Academic Standards Committee. The final part of the annual monitoring process is the

production of a report by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee, to present to a meeting of the Academic Board and the Board of Governors, on the schedule of outcomes from annual monitoring. This report also identifies and assesses any associated risks and those issues that are not resolvable at school level.

42 Account is taken of student feedback in annual monitoring through the consideration by the panel of a summary report on student evaluations produced for the Programme Board by the programme coordinator.

43 The discussions between the programme team and the panel are based on documentation produced in the normal course of managing the programme along with centrally provided statistics on student admissions, progression and completion. Documentation considered by the panel from the normal management of the programme includes: action plan and update from the previous year; external examiners' reports; responses to the external examiners from the Programme Board; programme coordinator's analysis of the responses to module and programme evaluation by the students; and the programme specification. Programme teams are encouraged by the panel to read their own documentation and the Briefing Paper stated that this has 'encouraged a more systematic analysis of programme delivery and student achievement' and this statement was supported by the staff. Annual monitoring panels may exceptionally recommend that a programme be subject to a full re-approval where the procedure has raised significant concerns.

44 The Academic Standards Committee maintains oversight of the annual monitoring process and, where appropriate, instigates action to address generic issues. The current scheme has been in place since 2004. The audit team was told, and saw evidence, that initially many programme action plans were appropriately rejected by the Committee because they were not thorough enough, or had an inappropriate focus. However, in later years fewer action plans have been so rejected as the University enhances its understanding of the requirements of the new procedures.

45 The Academic Standards Committee annual report states that its 'major evidential base... lies in the external examiners' reports' and includes a summary of the outcomes of any external scrutiny of the University's provision, a report on the appointment of external examiners and an analysis of statistical data on student recruitment, progression and achievement. The report contains a section showing how targets identified in the previous year's report have been addressed and an action plan that becomes a standing item on Committee agendas for the next six months. In its report on the academic year 2004-05, the Committee reviewed the new procedures for quality assurance through the collection of feedback from participants and came to the conclusion that for annual monitoring 'this has been a successful evolution to a more devolved system that has achieved its objective of ensuring a wider ownership of the process of quality management'.

46 The audit team heard from University staff that the new processes had improved their engagement with the quality systems, not least in increasing the number of staff that participated in monitoring and review panels. The team read a number of annual programme reports and associated documentation and confirmed that the Academic Standards Committee draws on a wide evidence base to inform its deliberations. The team considered that the Academic Standards Committee was generally effective in its monitoring of the University's mechanisms to ensure the standards of its awards and concluded that the annual monitoring process was robust, and proceeded according to the University's policies, which provided for an appropriate degree of scrutiny.

47 Although the fact that programmes were not required to produce any self-evaluation did save time and resources on the part of the programme teams, the result was that annual monitoring panels did have significant amounts of material to analyse. The staff involved in panels did not view this as problematic and were unanimously supportive of the new methodology.

## **Periodic review of programmes**

48 Periodic review is scheduled to occur every five years and may involve the simultaneous review of programmes within cognate areas. Periodic review is the responsibility of the Academic Standards Committee, reporting to the Academic Board. Programme teams produce a self-evaluation document to a university template. The self-evaluation is considered by a panel constituted by the Academic Standards Committee. The panel normally comprises a chair who will be a head of school or Academic Standards Committee member, a Committee member, a principal lecturer in learning and teaching from another school or the Head of the Centre for Learning and Teaching, the Head of the School that the programme is based in, and at least one external subject adviser nominated by the relevant School Quality Committee or Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee by the same process as for programme approval.

49 The task of the panel is to assure the Academic Board that its programmes are operating effectively and in ways that support the Corporate Plan, the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Commitment Charter. The panel meets or otherwise engages with students and discusses the programme with the programme team.

50 The panel produces a report to the Academic Board. The panel may make recommendations to the Programme, the School or the Academic Board that it feels are required to enhance the delivery of the programme. A panel may exceptionally recommend that a programme be subject to a full re-approval where the periodic review has raised significant concerns.

51 Formerly, a dual process existed where programme re-approval was integrated into the same event as programme review. However, the University reviewed these arrangements in 2004 and came to the conclusion that undue emphasis was being placed on the re-approval process at the expense of the review element. Under current arrangements, programmes are approved indefinitely, subject to favourable annual monitoring and periodic review. At the time of the audit, re-approval existed only for those programmes approved before 2004. As they come for re-approval they are approved indefinitely to bring them into line with the University's revised quality assurance systems. The re-approval process is kept active as a safeguard and can be triggered by the annual monitoring process.

52 Programmes receive notification from the Academic Standards Unit that they are due for review and re-approval. In a small number of cases recently the programme team failed to respond and as a result the period of validation was extended by one year and no formal check on the health of the programmes in question occurred. The audit team considered it advisable for the University to ensure that periodic review takes place every five years in line with the University's own requirements.

## **Joint honours**

53 The University's approach to joint honours is to link two programmes that are approved to run in 'joint' mode. Minor subjects contribute 25 per cent to the course content and grades for the total degree, while joint subjects contribute 50 per cent. Approval, annual monitoring and review processes occur in parallel, as each single honours subject is scrutinised. The principle is that the two subjects are studied separately and there is no attempt made to create interdisciplinarity beyond that which might be integral to either subject.

54 In documentation supplied to the audit team as part of the audit, the University stated that for joint honours the single honours 'programme specification will show clearly the award requirements and this will be unpacked in the student programme handbook'. With the exception of one programme that is offered only as a joint route, there are no separate programme specifications for joint honours programmes and consequently no single set of learning outcomes, although many student programme handbooks contain information on

how the curriculum is arranged for joint honours students. Although for some programmes a distinction between single honours and joint honours is made in that the joint honours students complete a subset of the learning outcomes of the single honours programme, no such distinction is made for major/minor awards. The audit team heard that joint honours students achieve the learning outcomes of both single honours programmes that contribute to their programme of study.

55 Although joint programmes are effectively monitored and reviewed, largely within the context of a single honours provision, distinct programme specifications and learning outcomes distinguishing single, major and joint honours programmes are not always produced. In order to provide a focus to students' study, the audit team came to the conclusion that it is advisable that the University reviews the definition and coherence of joint and combined honours programmes.

### **External examiners**

56 The Briefing Paper defined the role of external examiner as 'critical friend', who was 'to both assure standards and to enhance quality'. Regulations and procedures relating to external examining are clearly specified in a single document, 'External Examining at the University of Chichester'. External examiners are appointed by the Academic Board, occasionally as agreed by its standing committee, using a single and appropriate set of appointment criteria. Nominations for external examiners originate at programme level and come to the relevant School Quality Committee for consideration. Nominations that are recommended for approval by the School Quality Committee are discussed by the Academic Standards Committee prior to submission to the Academic Board. The Briefing Paper described this multi-layer approval process as ensuring 'that nominations do not come to the ASC without a thorough discussion at school level'. The audit team was able to note a thorough discussion at each level. In its annual report, the Academic Standards Committee provides the Academic Board with a summary of the institutions from which external examiners are drawn. The University's view, with which the team concurs, is that this 'enables the Board to ensure that its standards are not simply calibrated against those of like institutions, but are benchmarked across the sector' and 'enables the Academic Board to make a judgement on whether an appropriate diversity of external advice is being received by the University'. The annual report of the Academic Standards Committee also comments on the overall quality of external examiners' reports and, in detail, on their findings. Where problems arise with respect to individual external examiners, the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee writes to them to seek a resolution.

57 External examiners are given an induction to the relevant programme(s) as a meeting with either the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee or the Head of the Academic Standards Unit.

58 The reports of external examiners are sent to the Head of the Academic Standards Unit but are addressed to the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee, who reads all the reports. Copies are sent to the Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor, and for postgraduate taught programmes to the Director of Research. Programme coordinators complete a pro forma indicating the programme team's response to the report. The response is signed-off by the head of school and considered, along with the external examiner's report, as part of the annual monitoring arrangements. Once approved through this process, the response and the annual monitoring report are sent to the external examiner. The students the audit team met confirmed that external examiners' reports are shared with them through their representatives as a routine part of programme management. The team considered that the reports of the external examiners are distributed appropriately through the institution.

59 The audit team came to the conclusion that the use made by the University of the external examiner system in securing the standards of its awards was an example of good practice.

## Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points

60 The Briefing Paper stated that the University's 'quality systems utilise external reference points extensively to benchmark academic standards and to draw upon best practice across the sector' and that 'the ASC carries responsibility for ensuring that external reference points are met by all programmes'.

61 Programme specifications are produced as part of student programme handbooks and the University intends that they 'present a summary of the award programme to enable students and other stakeholders (such as potential employers of students) to understand what might be expected of award holders'. The template for the production of programme specifications requires reference to subject benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and, in the case of professional programmes, relevant professional standards. All programme specifications, as extracted from student programme handbooks, are publicly available on the internet. During the audit, the audit team examined many examples of programme handbooks and in each case the programme specification was clearly identified and contained appropriate references to the other components of the Academic Infrastructure. Furthermore, the team considered that the programme specifications appropriately reflected the relationship between delivery, assessment and standards as articulated in the FHEQ.

62 At programme approval, development teams are required to demonstrate the fit to external reference points including subject benchmark statements, the FHEQ and the *Code of practice*, published by QAA, particularly *Section 6: Assessment of students* and *Section 9: Placement learning*, and, for collaborative programmes, *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. The external adviser in programme approval is required to confirm that he or she is able to supply advice about the resonance of the proposed programme with each component of the Academic Infrastructure and is further advised of this role, in writing, by the University. The audit team saw many examples of programme approval reports and without exception there was evidence of an appropriate and full discussion of the Academic Infrastructure.

63 External examiners are asked to comment in their reports on whether the provision has 'met the requirements of the relevant external framework', including subject benchmark statements. This has been included as a fifth 'compulsory question' on the report pro forma. Scrutiny of the external examiners' reports confirmed that they were addressing this issue as part of their confirmation of standards. In periodic review, the template for the self-evaluation asks for information on how the assessment of students has been enhanced during the period under review and refers the authors to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. The audit team was satisfied that the arrangements for externality in programme design, review and assessment were consistent across the University.

64 Notification of changes and proposed changes to the Academic Infrastructure is managed by the Academic Standards Unit, which reports such changes to the Academic Standards Committee. The Committee then consults relevant post-holders and groups within the University before a full Committee discussion. The Committee also keeps a watching brief on the alignment of the University's activities with the elements of the Academic Infrastructure. The team saw evidence of a number of instances where the Academic Standards Committee deliberated on the *Code of practice* and on benchmark statements. Where appropriate, action was requested or responses approved. The University is aware of, and, through the Academic Standards Committee, has conducted a mapping against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

65 The staff the audit team met were fully aware of, and were knowledgeable about, aspects of the Academic Infrastructure relevant to their role, and were able to cite application in quality procedures at the University.

66 A small proportion of programmes is accredited by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Reports by external bodies on the University's provision are sent to the Head of the Academic Standards Unit who schedules a discussion at the Academic Standards Committee. If appropriate, the Committee produces an action plan that is then fed back to the external body.

67 The audit team came to the view that the University takes due regard of external reference points and in particular that the Academic Infrastructure is embedded within the University's quality processes and is used appropriately to guide the University in the management of its quality systems. The team concluded that the University's full engagement with the Academic Infrastructure was a feature of good practice.

### **Assessment policies and regulations**

68 The awards of the University are made under the provisions of the Academic Regulations (July 2007). These include the Assessment Regulations: Common Framework for Undergraduate Programmes, and the Assessment Regulations for the Postgraduate Award Scheme. These contain the assessment policies, and clear and detailed arrangements for assessment that programmes at each level must follow. Each year the Academic Board reviews its academic regulations and amends them in light of the experience of their application that year, informed by the annual report from the Academic Standards Committee, which, the University stated in the Briefing Paper, includes 'a section...on the operation of the assessment process'. Through reading the reports of the Academic Standards Committee, the audit team found that although assessment is considered, this was achieved by examining only the reports of external examiners. The team came to the view that an opportunity to reflect on and thus develop the assessment process had been missed.

69 At the time of the audit, the Assessment Regulations for the Postgraduate Award Scheme were under review, with the aim of producing a common assessment framework for postgraduate programmes, similar to that for undergraduate programmes. One significant change as a result will be a move from the current single Postgraduate Scheme Award Board, to school-based examination boards for master's programmes.

70 The Briefing Paper stated that 'the responsibility for making awards is devolved by Academic Board to its examination boards'. Undergraduate awards are recommended by programme examination boards, informed by the advice of the external examiners. The awards themselves are made by the Undergraduate Award Board, attended by programme coordinators, chief external examiners from the subordinate programme examination boards, and a chief external examiner for undergraduate programmes. The role of the Undergraduate Award Board is to ensure parity between all boards in the application of the academic regulations. To achieve this, each programme presents a completed template, providing details of outcomes from the programme examination boards. Parity is also promoted by a register of 'case-law' in application of the academic regulations, used and updated annually by the Undergraduate Award Board.

71 In its Commitment Charter (July 2006) the University informs its students that they can expect to have all items of assessment returned to them with feedback on performance 'as soon as possible (normally within three weeks)'. This expectation is reiterated in the 'University's Guidance on the Internal Moderation of all Forms of Assessments'. However, both the staff and students that the audit team met were unsure of the University's expectation in relation to timely return of student work. Furthermore, the students the audit team met indicated that there was considerable variability in both the quality and timeliness of feedback supplied to them. In a minority of cases feedback was supplied past the point where it could usefully inform the next assessment task.

72 The students the audit team met indicated considerable variability in the application of assessment criteria. For some programmes, assessment criteria were clearly articulated to students and used appropriately to support learning. However, for other programmes assessment criteria were not well communicated to students or were lacking in application.

73 The audit team formed the view that while the assessment regulations were robust, there was some evidence of inconsistency in their application at the level of individual programmes.

### **Management information - statistics**

74 The University published its Information Strategy in 2001, which comprises three Information Service Strategies, including a Management Information Service Strategy. The Information Strategy states that the University 'does not have a formal management strategy to which a management information strategy would relate'. Rather, the management information strategy 'is to facilitate effective devolved management by the provision of timely, accurate and appropriate information'. To this end a Management Information section of the Planning Department has been established to develop and manage services in this area and it supplies data to inform the University's quality processes.

75 The Briefing Paper stated that 'the quality systems...rely heavily on a routine supply of management information'. Centrally supplied data are used to inform annual monitoring and periodic review processes. The data include a range of statistics on applicants and entrants, progression and completion information on current students, and their performance at module level. While the audit team concluded that the data supplied were used appropriately as the basis for discussions at annual monitoring and in periodic review, it also noted the absence of a supply and discussion of first-destination data. Nevertheless, the University collects such data, grouped by programme, which are presented in a report to both the Board of Governors and the Academic Board, and are available on the University's intranet. The University will want to ensure that the data it collects on the destinations of its students are used effectively at programme level.

76 Detailed management information on the entry profile of students, their progression and achievement, along with a summary commentary is included in the annual report of the Academic Standards Committee. In recent years, the Academic Board has convened a working group of the academic management team to address significant issues arising. The audit team viewed this process as appropriate and demonstrated the University's oversight of management information issues.

## **Section 3: Institutional management of learning opportunities**

### **Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points**

77 See Section 2, paragraphs 60 to 67.

78 The audit team concluded that the University's use of external reference points contributed positively to the management of the quality of learning opportunities.

### **Approval, monitoring and review of programmes**

#### **Programme approval**

79 The programme approval process is discussed in detail in Section 2, paragraphs 29 to 35.

80 The role of the external adviser with respect to resources for learning in the programme approval process is discussed in paragraph 106 below.

#### **Annual monitoring**

81 The annual monitoring process is explained in detail in Section 2, paragraphs 40 to 47.

82 The audit team concluded that the University's procedures contribute effectively to the management of learning opportunities.



## Periodic review

83 The periodic review process is explained in detail in Section 2, paragraphs 48 to 52.

84 Periodic review falls under the responsibility of the Academic Standards Committee. The Briefing Paper stated that the Committee sees periodic review as exploring the relationship between the programme and the Corporate Plan, the School Strategic Plan, the Learning and Teaching strategy and the Commitment Charter. The University has also sought to separate periodic review from re-approval, with the former concerned with the enhancement of the student experience and the encouragement of good practice in learning and teaching.

85 Staff confirmed that, unlike programme approval, external subject experts were expected to attend review and re-approval events. The process allowed for student involvement but the way in which this was effected varied. As with approval, the external panel member does not have access to the resource statement but could be offered the opportunity to inspect the learning resources. The review meeting produces a report which may contain both recommendations and action points for the programme team to address. The report is submitted to the Academic Standards Committee and, subsequently, a report of the responses to the actions, signed off by the panel Chair, is forwarded to the Committee. Similarly, where the periodic review panel identifies significant issues concerning the resources that are available to deliver the programme, it may recommend that the resource scheduling procedure be undertaken again.

86 The audit team felt that, despite the evidence of slight inconsistencies in implementation, the process for periodic review and, where appropriate, re-approval, was effective in contributing to the management of learning opportunities and was in line with the *Code of practice*.

## Management information - feedback from students

87 The Academic Standards Committee annual report comments on the results of the National Student Survey, and a task group has been set up by the Vice-Chancellor's Group to see how this data and the results of other surveys can best be used.

88 Student evaluation is set out clearly in the Quality Handbook in the form of Guidance on the Programme Coordinator's Annual Report on Student Evaluation and in the Centre for Learning and Teaching's guidance paper, 'Evaluating the student experience of learning and teaching'. There are guidelines on module evaluation, although there is not a University-agreed module evaluation form as some local discretion is permitted. However, the sample of forms viewed by the audit team was broadly consistent in the information sought from students.

89 The Programme Coordinator presents an annual report for the Programme Board summarising student module evaluations, and the action to be taken in response. This forms part of the pack of documentation discussed at the annual monitoring event, where annual monitoring panels are charged to ensure clear action is signalled back to the students. Module coordinators indicate in their module handbooks how they have responded to the student evaluation of the module on its last presentation, although there is a lack of consistency over the detail of these reports back.

90 There is also a facility for programme coordinators to undertake programme cohort evaluations to supplement the module evaluations as part of the production of the annual report. This can be through focus groups, whole group discussions or other methods under the guidance of the Centre for Learning and Teaching.

## Role of students in quality assurance

91 Students are represented on the Academic Board, the Academic Standards Committee, the Learning and Teaching Committee, the Research and Scholarship, and various other committees. The President of the Students' Union is also a member of the Board of Governors.

In the case of the Learning and Teaching Committee, the specification is that the four student representatives 'reflect the diversity of the student body' and the Chair has a responsibility to ensure that this is the case in practice.

92 The Briefing Paper outlined examples of the University responding to student feedback and of the students playing a full part in working groups.

93 The student written submission comments that students are generally satisfied that they have a voice that is listened to but acknowledges that there is further work to be done by the University and Students' Union to improve student representation mechanisms. This view was supported in discussions with students. Each programme is required to operate with a Programme Board and this should always include student representatives. This will normally include two elected student representatives at each level. The Briefing Paper stated that most programmes report a good level of interest and activity by student representatives. Training for student representatives includes a two-hour training session with input from heads of school or subject leaders. The audit team found examples of effective student representation at programme board-level during meetings with students and inspection of minutes.

94 Despite the reservations in the student written submission, students were supportive of the forms of representation and viewed them as effective. They felt that the University was receptive to their views and acted on issues wherever practicable. The audit team considered that the mechanisms for student representation in the University's committees and the systems for securing feedback from students were operating effectively.

### **Links between research or scholarly activity and learning opportunities**

95 There is a scholarship and research policy, approved by the Academic Board, which articulates the importance of staff research or scholarly activity for student learning opportunities. The University stated that there is a close-knit relationship between teaching and scholarly activity in that 'one of the main functions of staff scholarship is to enhance directly or indirectly, the quality of the student experience'.

96 The policy contains different categories of scholarly activity that staff are expected to engage in. These are 'scholarship', which is described as active and critical engagement in a subject or discipline, 'advanced scholarship' which is described as scholarship at national or international levels of significance, usually of an applied or professional nature, and 'research,' centred on original investigation, that leads to new or substantially improved insights. There is an expectation that staff use scholarship, research and professional practice to inform their teaching.

97 There is an expectation that all teaching staff will be engaged in scholarship of some kind and that some staff will be further engaged in advanced scholarship or research. This expectation is also specified in the job descriptors for academic posts at the University. These descriptors form the basis for the appointment of new staff and the appraisal of existing staff. The expectation of the University, that staff will be engaged in scholarship, research and/or knowledge exchange is one area of discussion at the Performance Review and Individual Development Plan meeting (see paragraph 101) between individual staff and line managers. There is an annual audit of scholarship and research, which is available to the Head of School to inform this discussion.

98 Academic staff are also expected to use scholarship, research and professional practice to inform their teaching. This is monitored through one section of the Audit of Scholarship and Research which asks staff to illustrate how their scholarship or research has supported their teaching. Part of the Academic Standards Committee Annual Report focuses on whether the scholarship and research engaged in by staff is sufficient to the achievement of the first objective of the Corporate Plan, which is to develop flexible and innovative educational programmes informed by contemporary scholarship and research.

99 Staff confirmed their participation in the annual Audit of Scholarship and Research and saw it as a useful vehicle for articulating their own scholarly activity and as strengthening the annual report to the Academic Board and the Governors.

### **Other modes of study**

100 The University has a commitment to blended learning, with the use of e-learning being seen as complementary to more established methods of teaching and learning. The e-learning strategy emphasises the focus on learning that uses technology to support and enhance the campus-based learning and teaching model. The strategy is implemented through two key means, namely through the learning and teaching projects undertaken within each school (a number of which have an e-learning orientation), and the expectation that subject areas/programmes will demonstrate how they will promote the incorporation of information technology in the students' learning experience (although individual tutors are free to determine whether to incorporate e-learning into their part of the curriculum). Evidence for the extent of the University's commitment to e-learning can be seen in £50,000 being specifically provided for e-learning projects in 2005-06 and for which teaching and learning support staff were invited to bid. Monitoring of projects is undertaken at school level by school management teams, with the Learning and Teaching Committee reviewing progress at school level. The University also intends to set up an e-learning management group to specifically monitor implementation of e-learning.

101 Staff development needs are established at the individual level as part of the Performance Review and Individual Development Plan event, with individual requirements, including those related to e-learning, being sent on to Human Resources to inform future staff development provision. A number of e-learning training events have been held and a programme of staff development events was run during an 'e-Learning week' in 2006-07. The University intends to extend this to a semester-long e-learning programme of events. The Information Services department also provides staff development in the area of e-learning.

102 The Information Services department is responsible for the development and maintenance of the technical infrastructure for e-learning. The University is considering the replacement of its existing virtual learning environment (which is delivered through Portia, the University web portal) to improve e-learning functionality. The University is also currently participating in the joint HEA/JISC e-learning benchmarking exercise.

103 As part of approval and review, the extra support provided to students for e-learning is made explicit in the student handbook and the audit team saw evidence that this support was articulated as required in the student handbook and discussed during the approval process. However, the team noted that there are no additional requirements with respect to the e-learning competency of panel members, and it was not clear to the team how the University ensures that, in every case, approval and review panel members are appropriately experienced in this area. Similarly, there is no additional requirement with respect to provision of sample e-learning materials for the panel to review and form judgements as to its suitability for the type of learning proposed. The team considers it advisable for the University to review the approval and periodic review processes for programmes that involve significant amounts of flexible and/or distributed learning to ensure appropriate specialist scrutiny.

### **Resources for learning**

104 The University's information strategy makes clear the University's commitment to providing appropriate learning resources with the need for appropriate provision of resources to ensure delivery of the Learning and Teaching Strategy being explicitly identified. Priorities for the services themselves are laid out in the 2007-2010 Information Service Plan. The University noted that the learning resources will be considered as part of the strategic review underway in the University.

105 Provision of learning resources at a central level is the responsibility of the Department of Information Services (which is split into the areas of library services, information technology services, management information systems, reprographics, front-line services and media services). Within the library services, subjects are allocated to subject librarians, who liaise with the schools to ensure the appropriateness of resources for courses. Subject librarians attend programme boards at which learning resources and related issues are considered. Subject librarians also deliver information-skills sessions to students, researchers and teaching staff in all areas.

106 For new programmes, and those under review, the adequacy of resources is determined as part of resource planning. This involves a meeting between the University's Planning Group and the heads of the major support services to establish that the programme fits well with the corporate plan, and that the programme is economically viable. Programme approval panels do not view the resource statement, and given that the external adviser is not required to attend the University for programme approval events, the external adviser may not have the opportunity to review the resources available, and consequently not in a position to comment, among other areas, on the adequacy of the learning resources from the subject perspective. The audit team considered it advisable that the University review the role of the external adviser in the programme approval process to ensure that there is appropriate impartial and critical scrutiny, including with respect to resources for learning (see also above, paragraph 34). For programme review, the team heard that the external adviser is always given a tour of the facilities and that resources are always a standing item on the agenda.

107 The audit team identified further issues relating to joint and combined programmes. The treatment of joint or combined fields is not consistent. For example, students can be required to use two separate programme handbooks, each containing the full learning outcomes for the respective single honours programmes (see Section 2 above, paragraphs 54 and 55). There can also be difficulties with respect to timetabling for students pursuing joint and combined programmes. From meetings with students, the team learnt that there were, on occasions, timetable clashes that prevented students from attending some modules on their joint programmes. The team considered it advisable for the University to review the definition and coherence of joint and combined honours programmes. In doing so, improved procedures for the management of and information for such programmes could be developed.

108 The quality handbook notes that the annual monitoring process does not 're-consider the resources required by the programme', although the annual monitoring panel might 'identify significant issues around the resourcing of the programme'. In practice, student feedback is the principal means through which issues are identified. This feedback is often obtained through the use of student feedback forms, and where they are used, the forms usually obtain student views of resources, although the team noted that feedback response rates are sometimes low. The results of student feedback are compiled into a programme leader's report and it is this document that is reviewed by the annual monitoring panels. The audit team judged that a programme should not depend solely upon student views to judge the continuing adequacy of resources at programme level and the team considered it desirable that the University ensures that annual monitoring includes specific consideration of learning resources.

109 The information services department also conducts general surveys of student opinion of library/information technology resources. Feedback is also obtained through national surveys of student opinion such as the National Student Survey. Additionally, the University benchmarks itself against sector data provided by the Society of College, National and University Libraries. These data are reported in the Academic Standards Committee Annual Report. The audit team saw evidence that the University considered the outcomes of such internal and external surveys, and that appropriate actions are being taken in response to feedback.

110 In the case of collaborative programmes, the quality procedures are similar for those for programmes based at the University, with some additional safeguards. Whenever programmes are initially approved or reviewed, a site visit is undertaken by relevant University personnel

(for example, the Head of Library Services or the manager of the Centre for Collaborative Programmes) who follow clearly laid out procedures that describe the resources arrangements that should be reviewed. The aim of the initial site visit is to determine whether there is a comparable learning experience for collaborative students to that of students based on a main University campus. Respective responsibility for provision of appropriate learning resources is agreed in the Memorandum of Agreement and detailed in the Service Level Agreement. Ongoing views of the suitability of resources is obtained through the annual monitoring of collaborative partners, a process managed within the Centre for Collaborative Programmes, and overseen by the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee, which is charged with reviewing all aspects of collaborative provision that might have an impact on quality. As part of this monitoring, the report of the most recent site visit by the collaborative programme manager is reviewed. This report specifically indicates if the partners continue to have the wherewithal to support delivery of the programme. The liaison tutor is also required to submit a report for annual monitoring based on a summary of the liaison tutor's visit reports and this may also raise resource issues. The audit team concluded that the procedures for assuring the quality of learning resources for collaborative students are sound.

111 In order to demonstrate that learning resources are appropriate for research students before schools may recruit, they are required to provide a resource environment statement to the Research Degrees Group and Southampton University's External Research Degrees Committee, which will determine whether the proposed research environment is appropriate. A student satisfaction feedback exercise is conducted annually, feedback that is supplemented by students' annual progress reports (which may identify resourcing needs). Student representatives on the Research and Scholarship Committee also have the opportunity to comment on resourcing matters. Postgraduate research student provision is also subject to an annual monitoring process, with subject areas producing a self-evaluation document that includes a resource environment statement detailing learning resources and other facilities made available to research students. A panel, appointed by the Academic Standards Committee, scrutinises the self-evaluation documentation and meets with research coordinators from each subject area and with postgraduate research students. Where necessary, it makes recommendations to the Academic Board or other University-level committees as appropriate, and to school management teams. In the view of the audit team, arrangements for assuring appropriate learning resources for research students were appropriate.

### **Admissions policy**

112 Overall responsibility for admissions lies with the Head of Recruitment, Marketing and External Relations, who manages the central Admissions Office. The Admissions Office supports school admissions activities as undertaken by the school-based admissions tutors, who are responsible for admission to individual programmes. The Admissions Office makes formal offers to applicants in straightforward cases, or refers applications to the admissions tutors when more detailed scrutiny of the application is required. Programme admission requirements are established within the context of the University's general admissions requirements, which in turn reflect the principles of non-discrimination and objectivity as laid out in the Admissions Policy. Admissions tutors are members of the Admissions Tutors Group, meetings of which are held to discuss operational issues that have arisen and to share good practice.

113 In cases where English is not a prospective student's native language, applicants are required to have met the minimum English language requirement before commencing the programme. Students meeting a slightly lower minimum than the standard requirement may study undergraduate subjects in combination with International English Studies.

114 Applicants may be assessed for advanced entry to any programme of study. Recognition of credit is made following the University's accreditation of prior and experiential learning procedures. As part of this process, applicants are required to articulate clearly and provide

appropriate evidence of prior learning. Assessment of claims is the responsibility of the Admissions Tutor and the Pro Vice-Chancellor reviews all applications. Centrally provided accreditation of prior and experiential learning guidance is brief and some programmes have produced fuller guidance for local use. Transcripts clearly indicate where the University has accredited prior learning undertaken elsewhere. The audit team formed the view that given the current volume of accreditation activity, current arrangements are appropriate.

115 In the case of collaborative programmes, the audit team heard that the Admissions Office always exercises its right to finally approve applicants, in order to ensure the students are admitted in accordance with the University's admission policy and are suitably qualified.

116 Overall, the audit team considered that the University's admission process was effective and appropriate.

### **Student support**

117 Programmes may develop their own approach to student support providing that they meet a number of threshold requirements. In practice, almost all programmes opt to appoint an academic adviser who is normally a member of the academic staff. The adviser is appointed at the beginning of the student's studies, and generally remains the fixed point of contact over the programme of study. The Student Support Services Department provide centrally provided services including support related to: careers; counselling; disability and academic skills; finance; general welfare; and health. International students receive additional support (including that related to international welfare and immigration advice, weekly English language classes, and a language testing service); and follow a special induction programme.

118 Student entitlements to support are clearly laid out in programme handbooks. At approval and review, these arrangements are discussed and approved. Programme handbooks also include details of complaints and appeals procedures.

119 Services obtain and respond to feedback from students and each area reports annually to the Student Support Services Committee (a subcommittee of the Academic Board). Outcomes of the process are notified to the Academic Board so as to ensure it has adequate oversight of the appropriateness of student support. Additionally, services benchmark themselves against external standards, and may obtain external recognition; for example, the Careers Service was awarded Matrix Accreditation in 2003, and was re-accredited in 2006. The University has introduced an additional procedure for monitoring the effective delivery of support services: student services, along with other services, undergo a biennial review process.

120 Students who met with the audit team have reported general satisfaction with student support. They did note, however, that in the case of joint programmes, where students were appointed more than one adviser, students were unclear as to the role of each with respect to supporting and advising the student. They also reported that where only one adviser was appointed, the advisers were not always able to provide advice on the student's programme as a whole. In view of this, the team considered it advisable that the University review the definition and coherence of joint and combined honours programmes.

121 The University has developed a personal development planning process that is intended to integrate with the existing tutorial system. Take up of personal development planning thus far has been variable.

122 In the case of collaborative programmes, the procedures that are applied are similar to those programmes based at the University, although additional safeguards apply. Whenever programmes are initially approved or reviewed, as noted in the section on learning resources, site visits are undertaken by relevant University personnel and student support arrangements are reviewed. Student services provide additional support for students and may offer services related to accommodation, employment and careers and support for those with special learning needs.

Respective responsibility for provision of appropriate learning resources is agreed in the Memorandum of Agreement and detailed in the Service Level Agreement. Ongoing views of the suitability of resources are obtained through annual monitoring of collaborative partners. Overall, the audit team considered that the procedures for assuring the quality of support services for collaborative students were sound.

123 The level of tutorial support and the quality of supervision for postgraduate research students is monitored by the Research Degrees Group through the annual progress reports from both supervisors and students at the start of each academic year. Both the progress reports and results of the student satisfaction questionnaire are considered by School Research Coordinators and then discussed at the Research Degrees Group. A summary is submitted to Southampton University's External Research Degrees Committee. Additionally, student representatives on the Research and Scholarship Committee may comment on student support and as noted in this report (see below, paragraph 171) postgraduate research students provision is also subject to an annual monitoring process which will consider student support. Overall, the audit team considered that the processes and mechanisms in place for monitoring the support of research students were effective.

### **Staff support (including staff development)**

124 Staff development requirements are established through the Performance Review and Individual Development Plan meeting and any staff development needs that are identified are relayed to the Human Resources Service. External examiners' reports also may allude to generic staff development needs. Similarly, annual monitoring will identify development needs related to programmes. The Staff Development Committee, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, brings together information from these disparate sources and proposes an appropriate staff development programme designed to provide for the staff development needs of learning and teaching staff.

125 The Centre for Learning and Teaching plays a key role in delivering this programme of staff development activities, and also runs an annual learning and teaching conference and offers seminars on aspects of pedagogical practice. As part of its remit, the Centre also provides support for a well-established teaching peer observation scheme. The level of commitment and resources dedicated to staff development was commended in the 2006 Investors in People certification report, which also singled out the peer observation scheme as 'facilitating constructive feedback in a non-threatening way'. All staff who are new to teaching in higher education are expected to follow the University's HEA-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching, or to be undertaking an equivalent programme.

126 The University employs a number of associate lecturers who, in the case of associate lecturers with substantial teaching loads, are subject to the same staff development requirements and appraisal as full-time members of staff. Postgraduate research students are also able to take part in the staff development opportunities offered by the University, and a number of such students have registered on the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching programme. The audit team was made aware of a research student with a substantial teaching load whose development needs had not been met. The team suggests that the University should ensure that all postgraduate research students are given appropriate training prior to undertaking a teaching role.

127 To guarantee that supervisory teams possess the necessary skills to supervise students, the qualifications and experience of each supervisor are reviewed, first by the Research Degrees Group and then by Southampton University's External Research Degrees Committee. All supervisors are required to undergo supervisor training which is provided by the University and by Southampton University. Supervisors also attend events organised by external bodies such as UK Council for Graduate Education. The research and scholarship activity of every member of academic staff is audited annually in the Audit of Scholarship and Research, so as to ensure that supervisors continue to be appropriately qualified.

128 Collaborative partners have access to the training and staff development facilities at the University, and collaborative staff development is monitored via the liaison tutors' reports and included as part of the annual monitoring process, which is overseen by the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee. The curricula vitae for new collaborative staff teaching on collaborative programmes are also reviewed as part of annual monitoring.

129 Overall, the audit team found that the University's approach to staff support and development made a positive contribution to the management of the quality of learning opportunities available to students.

## **Section 4: Institutional approach to quality enhancement**

130 The Academic Standards Committee submits an annual report to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors. The purpose of the annual report, and of the Committee itself, is to assure that, inter alia, 'the University fostered a culture of enhancement, through its quality assurance procedures and the dissemination of good practice'.

### **Management information - quality enhancement**

131 The University view of enhancement is aligned with that as defined in the *Handbook for institutional audit: England and Northern Ireland 2006*, and the University considers enhancement to be 'the process of taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of learning opportunities'. This approach is described by the University as being clearly articulated in the quality principles that preface the quality procedures, namely the intention to 'ensure full ownership of [these] academic standards and effective quality enhancement by all academic and administrative staff', 'utilize a risk management approach to enable an efficient use of time and other resources' and to 'facilitate the dissemination of good practice in support of quality enhancement'.

132 The University noted that when its quality systems were revised over the period 2002 to 2004, a key consideration was ensuring that they promoted enhancement of learning and teaching. The Briefing Paper identified the processes relating to resource scheduling, programme approval, programme review, annual monitoring and minor change procedures being particularly prominent in this respect.

### **Management information**

133 The Briefing Paper also states that the delivery plan for the Learning and Teaching Strategy provides additional evidence of the University's commitment to enhancement. As part of this plan the University established a school-level system, which aims to support and encourage good practice and a culture of enhancement. A key feature of the school-level system is the Principal Lecturer (Learning and Teaching) within each school, who has a responsibility for enhancing learning and teaching and disseminating good practice both within the school and across the University. Principal lecturers (learning and teaching) are coordinated and supported by the Centre for Learning and Teaching. The 2006 Investors in People report commended the role of the Principal Lecturer (Learning and Teaching) posts in 'linking with the Centre for Learning and Teaching to promote and share good practice'.

134 In meeting the aims of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Schools are required to undertake a number of school-based learning and teaching projects, which, taken as a whole, should meet the Learning and Teaching Strategy strategic intentions. The projects themselves are monitored by the school management teams, with the school's Principal Lecturer (Learning and Teaching) reporting to the Centre for Learning and Teaching, which in turn reviews project progress and reports on this to the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Centre organises lunchtime development sessions at which outcomes from the Learning and Teaching projects are discussed.



135 The audit team heard that the University's view of effectiveness of enhancement was formed through the processes described above, and via the other academic quality monitoring mechanisms. This latter supervision includes the Academic Standards Committees annual report to the Academic Board (which is based upon reports from such sources as external examiners, outcomes of periodic review, and annual monitoring amongst other sources). Additionally, the Learning and Teaching Committee receives reports on good practice, reports on the Learning and Teaching projects, and notes of Centre for Learning and Teaching meetings. Student feedback and the implications for enhancement are considered at various stages of the quality processes; however, there was no evidence that any integrated supervision is obtained, an issue the University is aware of and is addressing.

136 The audit team formed the view that although there is ample evidence of the University actively promoting enhancement activity, and that there is enhancement at a local level, the overall effectiveness of the enhancement processes was not being comprehensively evaluated, and that there was no coherent view taken of enhancement issues and opportunities at an institutional level. The team therefore considered it desirable that the University reviews the institutional processes for the oversight of quality enhancement.

### **Good practice**

137 Since the last institutional audit, the University has established a number of processes for the identification and dissemination of good practice. These include: the external examining system; the annual monitoring process (which specifically identifies examples of good practice); staff meetings that specifically share good practice (for example, Admissions Tutor Group meetings); the creation of principal lecturers (Learning and Teaching) who have a responsibility for the sharing of good practice; and the establishment of the Centre for Learning and Teaching which has responsibility for the dissemination of good practice; reporting on good practice identified within the University; producing good practice guides; and organising events to disseminate good practice (for example, the lunchtime sessions in which staff present papers on aspects of their practice in an informal setting).

138 The audit team saw evidence of the identification of good practice through these means, and of attempts being made to disseminate these examples across the University. However, the effectiveness of this dissemination in encouraging changes in practice was not measured. Consequently, the team considered it desirable for the University to review the institutional processes for the oversight of the dissemination of good practice.

### **Staff development and reward**

139 The University's staff support and development processes provide for enhancement of teaching and learning processes. This is particularly prominent in the Performance Review and Individual Development Plan process, which identifies any enhancement needs, and in the range of staff development activities provide by the Centre for learning and Teaching (see also paragraphs 125 and 134).

140 The audit team heard that the University is intending to introduce a prize for excellence in teaching that will be based on student nomination.

## **Section 5: Collaborative arrangements**

### **The institution's processes for managing collaborative provision**

141 At the University, collaborative provision is defined as programmes leading to an academic award that are collaboratively developed and in which learning and teaching are supported in sites other than the University campuses. It also relates to where the University is involved in joint delivery or offsite delivery.

142 The previous institutional review (2003) expressed significant concerns around the University's management of collaborative provision and recommended the development of a clear and rigorous quality assurance framework for collaborative provision. To support the development of this quality assurance framework, the University appointed an external adviser in September 2004 and this role is still effective and in existence. In revising its quality assurance framework, the University took account of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision, and flexible and distributed learning (excluding e-learning)*. The University has devoted a good deal of time and effort into developing its framework for collaborative provision and has put in place a more strategic and risk-aware approach, underpinned by a clear policy statement. The University does not envisage a large-scale expansion of collaborative provision but where this is desirable, it will be undertaken only in subject areas of proven success and with trusted partners. The audit team considered the role of the external adviser to the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee in supporting the development of collaborative provision as a feature of good practice.

143 All programmes offered in collaboration under the name of the University of Chichester are subject to the same approval and review procedures as all other University programmes. This is detailed in the report 'Safeguarding Standards and Enhancing Quality' (2004) and is described in the Academic Framework for Collaborative Programmes, in the Quality Handbook (2006). A clear procedure for the development of a collaborative programme secures initial approval from the host school and subsequent approval within three months from the Academic Board and University directors.

144 The approval of programmes includes the additional consideration of resources available to deliver the programme at the partner institution, including the suitability of staff to deliver the programme. A site visit is identified as part of the approval procedure and a pro forma completed by relevant University personnel such as the Head of Library Services and/or Manager of the Centre for Collaborative Programmes. A formal memorandum of agreement, which clearly defines the responsibilities and provision of resources by each party, must also be signed by both parties prior to the delivery of the programme.

145 The Academic Framework for Collaborative Programmes Handbook details the criteria that must be met through the approval process and contains a template for an audit of resources and a Memorandum of Agreement, together with the development of a Service-Level Agreement. Approval of a collaborative programme involves the preparation of a participants' handbook, including a programme specification, together with the appointment of an external examiner and agreement of information to appear in the student transcript.

146 A collaborative programme is located within a school which holds the responsibility for the academic standards and quality of the programme and the school is proactively supported in the management of the programme by the Centre for Collaborative Programmes, which holds the responsibility for the implementation of the Academic Framework. For example, the Centre provides annual planning calendars for each programme as an essential aspect of the Service-Level Agreement and has arranged for collaborative students to visit the main campus.

147 The monitoring of delivery of the programme rests with the school. However, annual monitoring is undertaken by the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee, in conjunction with the school. This Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Standards Committee and is charged with the maintenance of quality and standards in collaborative provision. It has no authority to make minor changes or appoint external examiners or recommend new awards, such powers residing in school quality committees. The rationale for the division of responsibility was, in the view of the audit team, unclear between the School Quality Committee and the Collaborative Programmes Quality Committee.

148 The Centre for Collaborative Programmes coordinates the work of the liaison tutors, who are appointed by the school and whose visits to partner institutions are recorded. Liaison tutors are required to submit a report for annual monitoring, which highlights opportunities for enhancement of learning and teaching and dissemination of good practice. The roles and

responsibilities of liaison tutors are clearly defined and efforts have been made by the Centre to bring the tutors together in a network to share experiences and effect greater consistency of practice. However, variation in the way that liaison tutors carry out their roles and responsibilities is still in evidence. The audit team would encourage the University to continue with its efforts at effecting greater standardisation.

### **External examiners**

149 The process for appointing external examiners is the same as that for other University programmes and is set out in the Academic Handbook. Arrangements are made for the external examiner to have access to the delivery and assessment of the programme and to take part in examining boards. The external examiner is required to make an annual report and the programme team is required to respond to issues raised. The process is reviewed as part of annual monitoring and at programme boards.

### **Assessment policies and regulations**

150 The assessment policies and regulations are equivalent to those on comparable programmes at the University, with the assessment strategy outlined in the programme student handbook developed through the approval process. The calendar in the Service-Level Agreement details how records of assessment will be reported and recorded.

151 Moderation ensures that the student attainment matches that of equivalent University programmes/benchmark statements, and levels within FHEQ. Examining boards operating at partner institutions are chaired by a senior member of University staff. Formal complaints and appeals use those procedures that operate at the University and are included in the student handbook.

152 The responsibility for issuing award certificates and transcripts remains with the University. However, neither the award certificate nor transcript provided to the audit team in relation to its collaborative provision contained reference to the name and location of the partner organisation engaged in the delivery of the programme of study. In order to meet the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 2*, the team considered it advisable that the University ensures its transcripts or award certificates indicate the location of study in respect of collaborative partners.

### **Management information**

153 Consideration of management information rests ultimately with the school responsible for the programme and is used within the normal systems such as annual monitoring.

### **Learning resources**

154 In considering the provision of learning resources, the University's policy is not to ensure that there are identical resources available but that students are not disadvantaged significantly in terms of learning resources when compared to students on the main University campus. At programme approval, it is confirmed that learning resources are fit for purpose and this is checked through annual monitoring.

### **Admissions policy**

155 The admission of students is covered in the standard University Academic Regulations. Admission matters receive scrutiny at initial approval of programmes and subsequently requirements are articulated in the programme specification contained in the student handbook. Registration of students is operated through the University Admissions and Student Records office. However, the audit team was made aware of ongoing difficulties with core administrative systems, leading to students having difficulties in accessing learning resources. Consequently, the

team considered it advisable that the University reviews its procedures for the registration of students on collaborative programmes, in order to ensure that they have timely access to learning resources.

### **Student support**

156 Arrangements for student support, including academic and pastoral support, are explored during the initial approval process and the University also satisfies itself that appropriate facilities are in place by means of the site visit. The formal memorandum of agreement defines roles and responsibilities for the provision of appropriate resources to be provided by each partner.

### **Good practice**

157 The audit team learnt that liaison tutors play a key role in the dissemination of good practice and also that the Centre for Learning and Teaching and principal lecturers for learning and teaching in each school also support this process. However, although efforts have been made by the Centre for Collaborative Programmes to enable liaison tutors to meet and share practice, there is currently variation in the ways in which they carry out their roles and responsibilities (as noted above, see paragraph 148).

### **Staff support, development and reward**

158 The curricula vitae of all staff involved in the delivery of a programme at a partner institution are scrutinised at initial approval, annual monitoring and at periodic review, in order to ensure that they have appropriate experience and expertise. Any staffing issues are also raised by the liaison tutors in their reports. Staff teaching on programmes under service-level agreements are entitled to attend staff development activities. For example, staff teaching on partner programmes at West Sussex County Council have undertaken the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

## **Section 6: Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students**

159 Recent reviews have been generally positive on their assessment of the management of postgraduate research students. The evidence considered by the audit team led it to conclude that the arrangements for postgraduate research students, including those for support, supervision and assessment, were rigorous, operated effectively and met the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes*.

### **The research environment**

160 All postgraduate research provision at the University is delivered under the accreditation agreement with the University of Southampton, and the delivery is determined by the University of Southampton's Regulations for Higher Degrees and Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision. Research students at the University are also subject to the University of Chichester's Academic Regulations, including the disciplinary procedures.

161 The University of Chichester has a research and scholarship committee, which is a subcommittee of the Academic Board and chaired by the Director of Research. The committee works with school research and scholarship groups. All schools have research and scholarship groups with terms of reference approved by the Research and Scholarship Committee and their minutes are received and scrutinised by the Research and Scholarship Committee on behalf of the Academic Board. The Committee also monitors and coordinates the work of the University Research Degrees Group and the Ethics Committee.

162 The Research Degrees Group is a subcommittee of the Research and Scholarship Committee and acts on its behalf in the oversight of the management of student research projects, applications, progression and achievement of students. Two of the members of the Research Degrees Group represent Chichester on the Southampton External Research Degrees Committee. Issues raised at this committee are reported back to the Research and Scholarship Committee.

163 Research is currently concentrated in three of the schools. Each subject area that takes research students produces a research environment statement that must be accepted by the Research Degrees Group and the Southampton External Research Degrees Committee and which is used partly to determine whether there are adequate supervisory resources. The research environment statements also report on numbers and progress of students, available learning resources and seminar and training programmes available for staff and students.

164 The annual Audit of Research and Scholarship involves each member of academic staff completing a pro forma detailing their activities covered by the terms scholarship and research. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Research analyses the audit on behalf of the Academic Management Team. The analysis is reported back to schools and is also incorporated into the Academic Standards Committee's Annual Report to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

### **Selection, admission and induction**

165 The Admissions Policy is covered by the University of Southampton Regulations and Code of Practice. In addition to direct entry to MPhil/PhD, the University of Chichester employs a probationer MPhil Scheme. The Scheme admits students to the University to prepare for a higher degree by providing them with six tutorials and providing access to resources and facilities. The aim is to help students prepare for research. Approximately half of those first admitted through the scheme proceed to full registration. The students felt that the probationer scheme was particularly effective for students new to both research and to the University. The audit team concluded that the Probationer MPhil Scheme designed to prepare students for a higher degree programme is a feature of good practice.

166 Student applications for research projects, and their upgrading, the monitoring of students via annual progress reports and other issues such as suspension of study or change of supervisor are managed using University of Southampton forms which are scrutinised by the Research Degrees Group. The Group is also responsible for the scrutiny of research environment statements and liaison with the University of Southampton is delegated from the Research and Scholarship Committee to the Research Degrees Group, which includes an external representative. The Group also deals with issues around the accredited relationship of the University of Southampton with the University.

### **Progress and review**

167 The postgraduate research provision is subject to an annual monitoring event each year. Each subject area is required to produce a self-evaluation pro forma that incorporates the Research Environment Statement and includes commentary on student support, student representation, and evaluation, admissions and completions, and the approach to research and scholarship in the context of the school strategy. The Academic Standards Committee appoints a group which scrutinises the pro forma and makes recommendations to the Director of Research on generic issues, to the Academic Board through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Annual Report and to its major committees (including the Research and Scholarship Committee). Recommendations also go to school management teams on specific action points and on areas of good practice.

168 The University produces a research annual operating statement for the University of Southampton and this includes data on progression and achievement. This is scrutinised by the Research and Scholarship Committee, and then referred to the Academic Standards Committee

and the Academic Board prior to being submitted to the University of Southampton for consideration by their External Research Degrees Committee.

169 The facilities and resources that must be made available to full and part-time students are specified in the Southampton Regulations and Code, and interpreted by each School in its Research Environment Statement. The University provides online access to a number of relevant subject-based bibliographical and full-text databases. Information support and guidance is available from a team of subject librarians. Research students were very supportive of the learning resources provided and in particular the work of the subject librarians.

170 Tutorial support and the quality of supervision is monitored by the Research Degrees Group through the annual progress reports from both supervisors and students at the start of each academic year. These forms require comment on the nature of the supervision provided, networking, research training, publications and conference/seminar attendance. A detailed action plan is required of the student.

### **Feedback mechanisms**

171 A research student survey is carried out and this supplements the annual progress reports and supports the annual monitoring of the postgraduate research provision. The results of the surveys are considered in the annual reports made to the University and to Southampton. These surveys, together with the detailed progress reports, are considered at annual monitoring events and findings are relayed to students, electronically and via noticeboards. Students are represented on the Research and Scholarship Committee and a standing item on each agenda ensures that students have the opportunity to comment on matters that affect them in the University. Students also have representation on the school research and scholarship groups.

### **Supervision**

172 Supervision is carried out by supervisory teams containing at least two supervisors for each student. Details of the academic qualifications and experience of the supervisors are scrutinised by the Research Degrees Group and later by Southampton's External Research Degrees Committee, in order to ensure that teams contain the necessary expertise and experience. All supervisors undertake training in supervision, provided at Chichester and Southampton, and annual training meetings for supervisors take place in each school. The Director of Research manages the University programme of training sessions for supervisors. All members of supervisory teams, including experienced supervisors, are expected to undertake training for the role and this is provided as part of the University Staff Development programme. Internal examiners undergo formal training for the role.

173 There was some confusion among the staff over whether there are University requirements governing the regularity and formality of the meetings between supervisors and students. Students described very different experiences in terms of the number, length and formality of the supervisory meetings. Although the progress report and the research student questionnaire ask about the regularity of supervisory meetings, it is not clear how this is followed up. The audit team would encourage the University to ensure that the minimum requirements of the University in terms of supervisory meetings for postgraduate research students are further promulgated to all staff involved in student supervision, and that it closely monitors adherence to those requirements.

### **Development of research and other skills**

174 The Director of Research, together with school research coordinators, organises a programme of training for research students every year. Schools are responsible for setting up subject-specific training sessions each year both for staff and for students. At induction, students are given a list of training events and are expected to record their progress through the courses

in personal development planning files. Students are also encouraged to attend events held within the general staff development programme run by the University.

175 Research students have the opportunity to provide or support teaching, tutorial or demonstration at undergraduate and master's level. Although there is an expectation that students undertake formal training in learning, teaching and assessment provided by the University, it is not always the case that this training occurs before teaching is undertaken. Reasons of timing were cited for this and alternative coaching was provided in one instance. However, the audit team considered it desirable that the University ensures that postgraduate research students are given appropriate training prior to undertaking a teaching role.

## Representations

176 Research students wishing to make a formal complaint are referred to the University's Academic Regulations for details of complaints procedures. Appeals are also made under the University's Academic Regulations. The audit team noted that no appeals by postgraduate research students have been made to date.

## Section 7: Published information

177 The University publishes a range of marketing and pre-admissions material in both hard copy and online. The Marketing Admissions and External Relations Department is responsible for managing the information verification process, in order to ensure the accuracy of information used in printed publications such as the Undergraduate, Postgraduate and International Prospectuses and the University website.

178 Staff at departmental level are initially responsible for signing off the accuracy of information and images used with final checking undertaken by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor. The final proofreading is undertaken by the Clerk to the Governors.

179 Programme handbooks contain information on regulatory matters, operational issues, curricula and assessment, together with aspects of student support. Programme approval requires the production of a standard student handbook, according to a corporate template, in order to ensure threshold information is available to students. The programme specification appears within the student handbook. Examples of best practice are made available through the Academic Standards Unit website. Students found the handbooks useful and the information made available to them mostly helpful and reasonably accurate.

180 The audit team found evidence of comprehensive and accurate information on the provision offered and the facilities available for students. Programme handbooks were comprehensive containing a range of relevant and precise information about programme and module content, programme structure, assessment procedures, and the range of support services available. Information on complaints and appeals procedures is also present. These handbooks were valued by students.

181 There is also a robust protocol for the quality assurance of information to be included on the University website, with information being checked by the Head of Marketing and Admissions and the Web Coordinator. Material for Teaching Quality Information is managed by the Head of Academic Standards Unit and careful attention was paid to it until the site's suspension in December 2006. The University is committed to publishing information in the form of summaries of external examiners' reports and outcomes of periodic reviews and is aiming to be ready to launch these sections on its website in January 2008.

182 Overall, through the student written submission, students considered the information that the University of Chichester publishes in its pre-entry material and prospectuses to be reasonably accurate. The audit team considered that information provided on the learning resources and facilities available is appropriate.

**RG355a 04/08**

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2008

ISBN 978 1 84482 814 2

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education  
Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01425 557000

Fax 01452 557070

Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786