London FoundationCampus

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

January 2012

Key findings about London FoundationCampus

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

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

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

Good practice

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

- the appointment of an Academic Registrar to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and to drive enhancement reflects the provider's commitment to quality assurance (paragraph 1.1)
- secure production of examination papers and robust invigilation procedures, including exemplary practice in requiring photographic proof of identity, is effective in ensuring the integrity of the assessment process (paragraph 1.5)
- the personal tutor scheme provides weekly group tutorials guided by a structured scheme of work which ensures consistency in students' access to support and guidance (paragraph 2.8)
- the Student Induction Programme provides a thorough and supportive introduction for new students and its rolling programme of induction events at key points during the year enables all students to receive support on entry to their programme (paragraph 2.10)
- the establishment of the post of Student Support Officer (HE) has facilitated provision of well planned, personalised, student advice and guidance, which is effective in preparing students for progression to further study (paragraph 2.11)
- the Student Ambassador Scheme, underpinned by effective training, gives students the opportunity to develop their social and communication skills while helping others (paragraph 2.12)
- the website is comprehensive and provides clear and relevant information, particularly through its course finder element which students found particularly helpful in choosing an appropriate programme and prospective university (paragraphs 3.1, 3.2)
- FOCUS provides a range of management and academic information to tutors, enabling them to identify, at an early stage, those students who may be at risk, facilitating prompt remedial action (paragraph 3.3)
- comprehensive and rigorous agent training and monitoring ensures that students receive accurate and consistent information (paragraph 3.5)
- the comprehensive Tutor/Personal Tutor Handbook is particularly helpful for part-time tutors and ensures consistency of approach and of the student experience (paragraph 3.6).

Recommendations

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

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- deliver a comprehensive programme of staff development to embed quality procedures, including engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and more formal recording of meetings and procedures (paragraphs 1.3, 1.7)
- clarify with its awarding organisation the appropriate level for the Master's Foundation Programme (paragraph 1.6)
- implement an effective and clearly documented pre and post-assessment internal moderation policy in accordance with the *Code of practice*, *Section 6: Assessment of students* (paragraphs 1.8, 1.9)
- ensure that the process of external examining is in accordance with the *Code of practice*, *Section 4: External examining* (paragraphs 1.10, 1.11)
- establish examination boards for each programme, which external examiners will attend, to ratify results and confirm progression (paragraph 1.12)
- ensure that grading schemes are stated accurately and consistently (paragraph 3.10).

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

- complete its mapping exercise to the *Code of practice* and to relevant award and subject benchmark statements and implement the required actions at an early date (paragraphs 1.7, 2.4)
- ensure the prompt implementation of its plans for a Student Representative Council and student representation in the committee structure (paragraph 2.6)
- implement peer observation in a systematic manner to facilitate sharing of good practice and enhance learning and teaching (paragraph 2.7)
- clarify the full range of support provision available to students (paragraph 2.9)
- monitor its students' usage of facilities provided through its agreement with Birkbeck College (paragraph 2.16)
- provide students in advance with more detail of subjects to be taught in each term of the programme to inform their choices and help them prepare (paragraph 3.4)
- ensure consistent use of terminology and implement a version control procedure, including inserting the date of the most recent change on the provider's website (paragraph 3.8)
- maintain a record of partner organisations' approved text and images (paragraph 3.9).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Review for Educational Oversight[1] (REO) conducted by QAA at London FoundationCampus (the provider; LFC). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of NCFE. The review was carried out by Ms Karen Buckwell, Ms Jenny M. Rice, Professor Tony Whitehouse (reviewers) and Mr Jeff Butel (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding organisation, meetings with staff, current and former students.

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

- Qualifications Credit Framework
- NCFE
- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

London FoundationCampus (LFC), founded in 2010, is the newest of a set of FoundationCampuses based on UK university campuses and managed by Cambridge Education Group. Originally located at London South Bank University, LFC subsequently added the Birkbeck College site to its sponsor licence. When the remaining five students based at its London South Bank University site complete their studies, it intends to operate only from the Birkbeck site. LFC works in partnership with six colleges of the University of London: Birkbeck College, Royal Holloway, Goldsmiths, Queen Mary, Institute of Education and the Royal Veterinary College. Several university departments offer guaranteed progression based on specific criteria. Students have the opportunity to apply to other London and UK universities.

LFC is managed by a Centre Head and a Deputy Centre Head. It receives support from a central Cambridge Education Group team consisting of the Chief Administrative Officer, Systems Manager and Academic Registrar. In total, there are eight full-time members of staff at LFC, the administration team, and two full-time teachers who are supported by 15 sessional members of staff who teach between five and 26 hours per week, representing 6.5 full-time equivalents.

At the time of the review, LFC offered the following programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation:

NCFE
- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (Birkbeck College) (95 students)
- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (London South Bank University) (5 students)
- Master's Foundation Programme (Birkbeck College) (34 students)

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

The provider's stated responsibilities

The provider is responsible for academic standards, the quality of learning opportunities and for public information on behalf of its awarding organisation. Responsibility for monitoring and review of the provision is shared with the awarding organisation.

Recent developments

The provider has moved its main operation from its London South Bank University site to Birkbeck College, University of London. Student numbers have increased significantly and, to accommodate this increase, additional space has been rented from Birkbeck College. This includes a staff room, with better facilities and space for students to meet tutors or administrative staff. The parent organisation FoundationCampus has invested in a new Academic Registrar post to assure and enhance the quality of the student experience across all FoundationCampus centres. Following this appointment a revised academic governance structure has been established to clarify reporting lines and responsibilities.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A student submission was presented. The views of current students were gathered through questionnaires, informal surveys, representative group meetings, comments boxes and a discussion board blog. A former student gathered feedback from fellow former students. Staff provided administrative assistance. In addition, students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the review team during the visit.

Detailed findings about London FoundationCampus

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 London FoundationCampus (LFC) delivers two programmes, the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) and the Master's Foundation Programme (MFP), under licence from NCFE Investing in Quality. Cambridge Education Group has overall responsibility for standards for all programmes through its Academic Board. The programmes are managed effectively within LFC's organisational structure under the direction of the Head of Centre, and the Academic Registrar whose remit extends across the Cambridge Education Group. These key staff, who are members of Academic Board and the two programme committees, demonstrate a clear understanding of academic standards. In particular, the Academic Registrar post is pivotal in the management of standards as was evidenced in the post holder's contribution to the review. This appointment, in August 2011, reflects LFC's strong commitment to quality assurance. The team considers this to be good practice.

1.2 There is an established framework for quality assurance but, in discussions with the team, many staff members were unfamiliar with it and relied heavily upon the leadership of the Academic Registrar. The two programme committees receive minutes from the subject groups and report to Academic Board. It is the responsibility of the programme committees to produce the Annual Monitoring Report. LFC acknowledges that the programme committees are still at a developmental stage and that subject leaders and student representatives need support to operate effectively. The membership and terms of reference for subject groups, programme committees and Academic Board are still to be made explicit.

1.3 Subject groups are responsible for the design and delivery of subjects within the programmes and core subject leaders, in research methods, law and business, contribute effectively to the management of the programmes. Subject groups review academic standards and consider improvements but have not recorded their activities consistently. The team considers it advisable for LFC to undertake more formal recording of meetings and procedures in order to provide a clear audit trail.

1.4 LFC has a small and effective management and administrative team. These positions are supported by staff centrally in the Cambridge Education Group, including a Chief Administrator, a Systems Manager and the Academic Registrar. The management team is viewed, by staff and students, as approachable and receptive to suggestions for enhancement of academic standards.

1.5 There is a secure procedure for production and invigilation of examination papers. Exemplary practice is noted in the consistent application of the need for students to display photographic identification.

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

1.6 The arrangement with NCFE identifies the award level within the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) rather than *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. There is inconsistency in programme-related documents in the use of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and QCF terms relating to award level. The programme specifications refer to NQF levels whereas the NCFE

certificates state QCF levels. The Undergraduate Foundation Programme is awarded at level 3 and the Master's Foundation Programme is awarded at level 4. Although former students who met the team felt well prepared for transition to university study, the team considers it advisable that LFC clarifies with its awarding organisation the appropriate level for the Master's Foundation Programme.

1.7   LFC has undertaken a mapping of its current and planned practice to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). The *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* has been identified as requiring further development. Similarly, there is a draft Mitigation and Academic Appeals policy that has yet to be approved by Academic Board. Work on mapping to relevant award and subject benchmark statements is at an earlier stage. While recognising that considerable work has been done, the team considers it desirable for LFC to complete at an early date its mapping to the *Code of practice* and to relevant award and subject benchmark statements and to ensure greater understanding of, and engagement with, the Academic Infrastructure by staff.

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

1.8   Assessments, which are largely examination-based, are designed by subject groups and approved at programme committees. However, the quality of the proposed examination papers forwarded for external examiner review was highly variable, providing evidence of an ineffective internal pre-assessment moderation system. While the external examiner's comments were apposite and forthright, there is no transparency of process to assure the external examiner that suggested changes have been implemented. The team considers it to be desirable that LFC implements an effective and clearly documented pre-assessment internal moderation policy in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students.* This process is expected to become more robust when the quality assurance framework is embedded fully.

1.9   The assessment schedule on FOCUS, an information system accessible by all staff through LFC's intranet, indicates when second marking or moderation should be undertaken, but documented evidence of completion is limited. There is no clear information on requirements for moderation sampling and records of internal moderation of assessed work are inconsistent across subjects and programmes. Student marks recorded for the same examination in sociology exhibited a wide variation in two documents. The team was informed that the first marker was a new teacher unfamiliar with level 3 and the scripts were second-marked by the subject leader and the grades awarded adjusted accordingly. However, no documentary evidence recording this process was available. The team considers it advisable that LFC establishes an effective and well documented post-assessment internal moderation policy in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students.*

1.10   There are currently three external examiners appointed to cover all FoundationCampus provision; a fourth, to cover the English provision, is planned. An external examination nomination procedure was established in September 2010 although the forms submitted exhibit a wide range in the level of detail provided. Current external examiners have some connection with the Cambridge Education Group. LFC will need to ensure that further appointments are external to it and its university partners, and that external examiners are appointed for a clearly stipulated maximum term, in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining*.

1.11   External moderation of assessed work is not systematic and requires attention as identified in LFC's *Code of practice* mapping exercise. Completed student assessments for

the Undergraduate Foundation Programme have been subject to external review by one external examiner but not by the awarding organisation. Feedback from the external examiner was in the form of brief comments; use of the external examiner report form has yet to be implemented. The team considers it advisable that LFC's arrangements for external examiner review of student work takes account of the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining.*

1.12   Assessed results have not been formally ratified at a designated board. The team was informed that Academic Board would hold an extraordinary meeting in August 2012 to undertake this activity. The remit of Academic Board is wide and the team considers it advisable that LFC establishes dedicated examination boards for each programme, attended by external examiners, to ratify results and confirm progression.

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

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   LFC is responsible for all teaching and learning, resources and student support. Its agreement with Birkbeck College gives its students access to the College's extensive library and electronic resources and student support services. External oversight of learning opportunities is provided by NCFE through its validation and monitoring processes.

2.2   LFC manages the quality of learning opportunities through its committee structure. Academic Board, which covers all Foundation on Campus provision, is responsible for strategic and operational decisions, while programme committees and subject groups deal with operational matters relating to the provision of learning opportunities. The Academic Registrar's role includes oversight of learning opportunities provided and responsibility for the updating and embedding of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. LFC has established effective mechanisms to assure the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities, although some of these were at an embryonic stage at the time of the review visit.

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

2.3   Relevant sections of the *Code of practice* have been mapped to LFC's policies and procedures and its Action Plan (2012) identifies activities necessary to meet more fully the precepts of each section. Recent developments include an Admissions and Equal Opportunities Policy and a Disability and Discrimination Policy.

2.4   LFC, either directly or through its agreement with Birkbeck College, engages with the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students* and *Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance.* For example, its students are able to access Birkbeck College's Centre for Learning Support and Development which provides a range of support for disabled students. Similarly, LFC offers comprehensive career advice and guidance, but further help is available through Birkbeck College. The *Code of practice* has been used effectively to map learning opportunities provided internally and externally and identify areas

requiring further development. The team considers it desirable that LFC completes this mapping exercise and implements the required actions at an early date.

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

2.5   The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was approved by Academic Board in January 2012. It is intended to provide the basis for maintaining and enhancing teaching and learning activities and its action plan will be updated annually. Work has already begun to deliver its four key aims: 'a purposeful approach to curriculum design and operation; an inspiring curriculum, efficiently delivered and appropriately assessed; a personalised approach to students' experience; and to play to the strengths of staff in order to deliver an effective, high quality and personalised student experience'. Plans to raise awareness of the strategy will begin at programme committees and then be cascaded to all staff. The role of subject leaders will be crucial in disseminating this information and in shaping the approach of tutors to teaching and learning.

2.6   LFC gathers feedback on students' views on teaching and learning through end-of-module and programme surveys. Formal student representation is being developed through a proposed Student Representative Council that will lead to the elected membership of Academic Board and programme committees. A Student Representative Training Handbook supports the process. The team considers it desirable that these plans for a Student Representative Council and student representation in the committee structure are implemented promptly.

2.7   All new teaching and administrative staff appointments follow the Cambridge Education Group Recruitment Policy. Teaching staff are expected to have a teaching qualification and the team welcomes LFC's plans to seek opportunities for staff to acquire a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, particularly for staff teaching at higher education level. Maintaining and enhancing teaching and learning is informed by a lesson observation scheme, although this has not yet completed a full cycle. The scheme is management-led and conducted by the Centre Head and Deputy Centre Head. While this is a positive development, the team considers it to be desirable that peer observation is implemented in a systematic manner to facilitate sharing of good practice and enhance learning and teaching.

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

2.8   The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy outlines LFC's approach not only to academic but also pastoral advice and guidance. The Strategy identifies a key role for the tutor system and this is supported by a structured and comprehensive scheme to develop, and support, staff acting as tutors. A Tutor/Personal Tutor Handbook guides tutors in their role. They follow a scheme of work for weekly group tutorials and students can also meet tutors on an individual basis. Personal tutors monitor student academic progress using the informative Academic Review of Assessment Reports. The recent introduction of student individual learning plans provides further opportunity to discuss wider progress and set targets with students. The personal tutor scheme is a feature of good practice, providing an effective process to monitor and support students while ensuring consistency in students' access to support and guidance.

2.9   Support from a central team includes a Student Recruitment and Support Officer who is the initial contact for new students, and a Student Support Officer (HE). Further support is available from Birkbeck College student support services, although a number of students who met the team were not familiar with the additional facilities available to them.

The team considers it to be desirable that LFC raises its students' awareness of these facilities.

2.10   There are a number of entry points to programmes throughout the year and each is accompanied by an induction event. All students, including those enrolling late, are provided with a comprehensive induction process, including introduction to life and study in London, a student handbook and subject-based handbook. Students value the induction process and the team considers it to be good practice in providing effective support for all new students.

2.11   The Student Support Officer (HE) provides personal tutors and students with detailed advice and guidance on progression routes and application to higher education institutions. This is supported by a series of useful workbooks, including a UCAS Handbook, a Postgraduate Application Guide and a Personal Statement Guide. Students were very positive about the support provided by this Officer. The team considers that the establishment of the post of Student Support Officer (HE) has facilitated provision of well planned, personalised advice and guidance, which is effective in preparing students for progression to further study and represents good practice.

2.12   Through the Student Ambassador Scheme established students attend higher education fairs, communicate with students before they arrive and, on their arrival, accompany them on campus tours and help with orientation. The ambassadors receive detailed, well focused training that develops their interactive and communication skills. Students, including current and former ambassadors, were positive about the benefits they derived from the Scheme. The structured approach, together with effective training for the role, represents good practice.

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

2.13   LFC is increasing its provision to develop its teaching and student support staff. Currently it provides staff meetings and an annual conference. These provide opportunities for the discussion of teaching, learning and assessment and student support. Plans to create a more comprehensive and systematic approach to staff development are outlined in the new Quality Assurance Framework, and are developed more fully in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy where it states that all staff will 'undertake initial professional training' and 'engage in professional development regularly'. The associated action plan sets out to deliver more staff development sessions, funding for continuous professional development and peer observation. New staff undergo an induction by the Deputy Head of Centre and are provided with a Staff Handbook and the Tutor/Personal Tutor Handbook. Considerable support for new staff is also available on a more informal basis from experienced staff.

2.14   The committee structure is regarded as a mechanism for sharing good practice. The Academic Registrar will be disseminating information and guidance on the QAA's approach to academic standards and quality of learning opportunities at programme committees and to subject groups during 2012. There are plans for staff training on good practice in marking and internal moderation. However, given that many teaching staff are employed on a sessional basis and teach elsewhere during the week, it will be a challenge to ensure comprehensive attendance. Similarly, LFC feels it is difficult to provide support for scholarly activities to staff on sessional contracts.

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

2.15   The agreement with Birkbeck College defines the level of resource provision, including teaching and office accommodation, library, information technology and student support facilities. These resources were highly regarded by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges in its 2011 inspection report. The new Annual Monitoring Report includes a section on resources and will include student feedback on resources gathered through the end-of-module survey.

2.16   Students value access to Birkbeck College's information technology provision and its extensive library, to which they receive an induction, as well as access to other University of London college libraries. However, LFC does not monitor its students' usage of these resources. Such data could be used to ensure the sufficiency, and facilitate enhancement, of resources available to its students. Subject librarians are available to offer advice to LFC's staff and students and to receive suggestions for additional stock. The team considers it to be desirable that LFC monitors its students' usage of facilities provided through its agreement with Birkbeck College.

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

3   Public information

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

3.1   Information on LFC, the application and admission procedures, programmes of study available and university progression is widely available. Students confirmed that they found the website and brochures clear and that both provided the information required to inform their choice of institution and of programme.

3.2   The team considers the online coursefinder to be good practice in providing potential applicants and agents with clear information on the range of programmes of study available and entry requirements. Students who were unsure of the programme to which they should progress, after their foundation programme, found that the step-by-step process led them to select suitable programmes of study.

3.3   FOCUS provides tutors with a wide range of management and academic information, including attendance registers and records of students' academic progression. The team considers FOCUS to be good practice as it provides information enabling a tutor to identify, at an early stage, those students who may be at risk of failure, facilitating prompt remedial action.

3.4   The Student Handbook is comprehensive and contains information covering the full journey of a student from visa application, travel to the UK, arrival, registration and life as a student at LFC and living in London. Schemes of work, programme handbooks and assessment methods are included and students confirm the information is communicated effectively. However, students informed the team they would like more detail on the content of each subject prior to their arrival in order that they can prepare in advance. The team

considers it desirable that students are provided in advance with more detail of subjects to be taught in each term of the programme, to inform their choices and help them prepare.

3.5   The team considers the well organised and clearly documented agent training and monitoring to be good practice. Training, which is accredited by NCFE, consists of 10 assessed modules with certificates issued to those who are successful. LFC conducts a survey during student induction to assess the accuracy and completeness of information supplied to them by agents. Information gathered is used to enhance the training. Follow-up inspection visits are made to agents by Cambridge Education Group staff to observe the application and interview process. Students are therefore assured of receiving accurate and consistent information and students confirmed that agents supplied comprehensive and accurate information.

3.6   The Tutor/Personal Tutor Handbook is considered good practice as it is comprehensive, detailing clearly the roles and responsibilities both for a tutor and a personal tutor. This is a particularly helpful instruction and reference document for part-time tutors. Included in the Handbook are templates for lesson plans, tutorials, individual learning plans and records that must be kept. The use of standard templates ensures consistency of tutor practice and of student experience. The role of the personal tutor is also explained in the student handbook, thereby ensuring that students are well informed of the support they can access.

3.7   The assessment schedule is available electronically through FOCUS. The schedule identifies clearly summative submission and result publication dates. Programme delivery and subsequent assessment requirements are well planned, thereby avoiding bunching of assessments.

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

3.8   Documents for external publication are produced centrally by staff at the Cambridge Education Group and checked for content and accuracy by the Associate Director (Sales and Marketing). A Marketing Manager has been appointed recently by the Cambridge Education Group to develop and control all sales and marketing materials. Material for publication, including brochures and the prospectus, are proofread and printed by an external organisation. However, there is inconsistent use of terminology and typographical errors in internal and external documentation. While this does not affect the accuracy or completeness of the information provided, the team considers it to be desirable that the current procedure is reviewed to ensure consistent use of terminology and that a version control procedure, including insertion of the date of the most recent change on LFC's website, is implemented.

3.9   All printed materials and information on LFC's website referring to a university partner are approved in writing by the university partner. However, no formal record of these partners' approved text and images to be used in public information was available during the visit. The team considers it to be desirable that a formal record of partner organisations' approved text and images is maintained.

3.10   Detailed programme-level information is checked by programme leaders. However, there is some inconsistency in the stated grading schemes. The UFP Handbook 2011-12 states that 70 per cent is required to achieve a grade A, whereas in the module guide for law it states that 60 per cent is required. The team considers it advisable that LFC ensures accuracy and consistency in the grading schemes stated in its documentation.

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

Action plan[3]

London FoundationCampus action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight January 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the appointment of an Academic Registrar to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and to drive enhancement reflects the provider's commitment to quality assurance (paragraph 1.1)	Continue to provide support and training to staff on quality assurance issues Review of course documentation on an annual basis to ensure Academic Infrastructure is fully embedded Dedicated quality assurance toolkit provided on Focus for all staff	Aug 2012 and as required thereafter Aug 2012 and annually thereafter March 2012	Academic Registrar Academic Registrar Academic Registrar	Staff are confident in their use of the Academic Infrastructure Embedding of the Academic Infrastructure is evidenced in all course documentation Staff can engage with relevant quality assurance policies and procedures via Focus and enhance their knowledge and	Academic Board Programme Committees	Minutes of meetings; annual monitoring reports; student feedback; quality toolkit on Focus; feedback from staff to ensure information they require is accessible and understandable

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

				understanding		
• secure production of examination papers and robust invigilation procedures, including exemplary practice in requiring photographic proof of identity, is effective in ensuring the integrity of the assessment process (paragraph 1.5)	Review examination process and procedures annually to ensure process remains robust	Aug 2012 and annually thereafter	Academic Registrar	Examination process remains robust	Academic Board	Annual monitoring reports; annual review of examination process at programme committees; examination board minutes; external examiners' reports
• the personal tutor scheme provides weekly group tutorials guided by a structured scheme of work which ensures consistency in students' access to support and guidance (paragraph 2.8)	Review personal tutor scheme of work and handbook on an annual basis to ensure continued consistency in approach to support and guidance	Aug 2012 and annually thereafter	Academic Registrar in conjunction with Centre Head	Students report satisfaction with their personal tutors	Academic Board	Annual monitoring reports; student feedback capture at programme committees; student survey reports
• the Student Induction Programme provides a thorough and supportive	Ensure all student induction programmes are kept under constant review and are enhanced where	Aug 2012 and as necessary following student feedback	Centre Head with Student Recruitment and Support Officer	Students report satisfaction with their induction programme	Academic Board	Student induction surveys operated on a termly basis; reports considered at Academic Board and followed up as

introduction for new students and its rolling programme of induction events at key points during the year enables all students to receive support on entry to their programme (paragraph 2.10)	students report dissatisfaction					necessary
• the establishment of the post of Student Support Officer (HE) has facilitated provision of well planned, personalised student advice and guidance, which is effective in preparing students for progression to further study (paragraph 2.11)	Review Student Support Officer (HE) role and ensure service is consistent in providing student advice Consider adopting the role in other FoundationCampus centres	Aug 2012	Centre Head Chief Administrative Officer	Successful student progression to university partners, students report satisfaction with advice given	Academic Board	Alumni feedback; student feedback
• the Student Ambassador Scheme, underpinned by effective training, gives students the opportunity to develop their social and	Achieve NCFE validation for the Scheme to provide students with formal certification	Aug 2012	Academic Registrar in conjunction with Student Recruitment and Support Officer	NCFE certificates awarded to successful student ambassadors	Academic Board	Students report satisfaction with training; alumni survey; uptake of Scheme by other FoundationCampus centres

communication skills while helping others (paragraph 2.12)	Consider widening participation in the Scheme across all FoundationCampus centres	Aug 2012	Academic Registrar	Uptake of Scheme by other FoundationCampus centres	Other FoundationCampus centres	
• the website is comprehensive and provides clear and relevant information, particularly through its course finder element which students found particularly helpful in choosing an appropriate programme and prospective university (paragraphs 3.1, 3.2)	Students to be asked specific questions about the usefulness of the information contained in the website in induction survey	March 2012 and following each student induction	Academic Registrar	Students continue to report that the website is helpful in choosing appropriate programme and prospective universities	Academic Board	Student feedback (via induction survey)
• FOCUS provides a range of management and academic information to tutors, enabling them to identify, at an early stage, those students who may be at risk, facilitating prompt remedial action (paragraph	Review structure of Focus to ensure information is accurate and enhance usability by all members of staff, to include communication facilities such as discussion boards	Dec 2012	Chief Administrative Officer, Academic Registrar	More staff engage with material on Focus, to streamline and enhance communications in order to provide a better student experience	Working party of Academic Board	Staff feedback

3.3)						
• comprehensive and rigorous agent training and monitoring ensures that students receive accurate and consistent information (paragraph 3.5)	Annual review of Cambridge Education Group Accreditation Scheme training to ensure programme remains rigorous	Dec 2012 and annually thereafter	Head of Marketing	Students report satisfaction with agent advice and support	Academic Board	Student induction survey; agent feedback
• the comprehensive Tutor/Personal Tutor Handbook is particularly helpful for part-time tutors and ensures consistency of approach and of the student experience (paragraph 3.6).	Review handbook annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose	Aug 2012 and annually thereafter	Academic Registrar	Feedback by part-time tutors indicates satisfaction with handbook	Academic Board	Student feedback; part-time tutor feedback
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• deliver a comprehensive programme of staff development to embed quality procedures, including engagement with the Academic	Deliver session on Academic Infrastructure at 2012 Conference Academic Infrastructure sessions to be run at each Centre with	Feb 2012 Apr 2012	Academic Registrar Academic Registrar	Successful session delivery at conference Staff feedback indicates understanding of Academic	FoundationCampus staff Subject group and programme committees	Conference survey; minutes of meetings; audit report; handbooks; course documentation

Infrastructure and more formal recording of meetings and procedures (paragraphs 1.3, 1.7)	specific staff groups			Infrastructure		
	Audit to be carried out of all course documentation to ensure Academic Infrastructure is embedded	Aug 2012	Academic Registrar	Successful audit	Academic Board	
	Staff development regime to be instigated and delivered across all FoundationCampus centres, with emphasis on ensuring teachers have access to development activities to enhance and support their delivery of programmes	Aug 2012	Cambridge Education Group Human Resources Manager in conjunction with Centre Head	Documented evidence of staff undergoing continuous professional development	Academic Board	
• clarify with its awarding organisation the appropriate level for the Master's Foundation Programme (paragraph 1.6)	Discussion with NCFE to investigate possibility of validating the Master's Foundation Programme at level 6	March 2012	Chief Administrative Officer and Academic Registrar	Master's Foundation Programme becomes revalidated at level 6	Academic Board	NCFE revalidation
• implement an effective and clearly	Distribute assessment and moderation policy	March 2012	Academic Registrar	Assessment policy followed and evidenced by	Examination Boards; Academic Board	Examination board minutes; external examiners' reports;

documented pre and post-assessment internal moderation policy in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* (paragraphs 1.8, 1.9)	and procedure and ensure adherence by subsequent audit			documented moderated student work Samples sent to external examiners for scrutiny		audit results
• ensure that the process of external examining is in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining* (paragraphs 1.10, 1.11)	Complete mapping of current process to *Code of practice* and ensure actions are carried out by deadline indicated	March 2012	Academic Registrar	Successfully documented adherence to the *Code of practice*	Academic Board, Examination Boards	Minutes of meetings; external examiners' reports
• establish examination boards for each programme, which external examiners will attend, to ratify results and confirm progression (paragraph 1.12)	Examination boards established for final progression results in August 2012 to include all relevant staff and external examiners	Aug 2012	Academic Registrar	Minutes of Examination Boards and Terms of Reference	Examination Boards	Minutes of meetings; external examiners' reports; student progression results
• ensure that grading schemes are stated accurately and consistently	Review all grading schemes to ensure consistency across all documentation	March 2012	Academic Registrar	Grading schemes are consistent across all programmes and all documentation	Academic Board	Minutes of meetings; course documentation

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
(paragraph 3.10).						
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• complete its mapping exercise to the *Code of practice* and to relevant award and subject benchmark statements and implement the required actions at an early date (paragraphs 1.7, 2.4)	Complete mapping exercise and implement required actions	May 2012	Academic Registrar	Mapping exercise completed and actions carried out	Academic Board	Student feedback; staff feedback; annual monitoring reports; external examiners' reports; minutes of meetings
• ensure the prompt implementation of its plans for a Student Representative Council and student representation in the committee structure (paragraph 2.6)	Student Representative Council and student representation in the committee structure implemented	March 2012	Centre Head	Student Representative Council instigated; student representatives on committees evidenced	Centre Head; Academic Board	Minutes of meetings; student feedback
• implement peer observation in a systematic manner to facilitate sharing of good practice	Peer observation to be completed systematically and across all FoundationCampus centres, and	Aug 2012	Academic Registrar in conjunction with Cambridge Education Group Human	Documented peer observation process occurring and evidence produced on how good practice is	Academic Board	Feedback by staff; documented evidence of peer observation; student feedback

and enhance learning and teaching (paragraph 2.7)	documentary evidence produced		Resources Manager to devise peer observation process; Centre Head and Deputy Centre Head to embed process	shared, positive student feedback		
• clarify the full range of support provision available to students (paragraph 2.9)	Range of support to be fully documented in student handbooks and personal tutor handbooks	March 2012	Centre Head	Support documented and personal tutors briefed on the full range of support available	Academic Board	Student feedback
• monitor its students' usage of facilities provided through its agreement with Birkbeck College (paragraph 2.16)	Instigate annual monitoring of facility usage within Birkbeck to ascertain if students require additional resources	Aug 2012	Centre Head	Annual report on student use of facilities to be received at Academic Board	Academic Board	Student feedback; feedback from Birkbeck
• provide students in advance with more detail of subjects to be taught in each term of the programme to inform their choices and help them prepare (paragraph 3.4)	Website to be updated to include subject information in an accessible format for students	March 2012	Marketing Manager	Website has detail of subjects to enable students to prepare for their programmes, positive student feedback	Academic Board	Student feedback; induction survey results; agent feedback
• ensure consistent use of terminology and implement a	Instigate version control procedure for use with all	May 2012	Associate Director (Sales and Marketing)	Information is consistent and accurate, positive	Academic Board	Student feedback; annual review of information on

version control procedure, including inserting the date of the most recent change on the provider's website (paragraph 3.8)	FoundationCampus materials, final sign-off by Academic Board required			feedback from students on the accuracy of information		website
• maintain a record of partner organisations' approved text and images (paragraph 3.9).	Maintain record of partner organisations' approved text and images	May 2012	Associate Director (Sales and Marketing)	Central record of approved text and images produced	Academic Board	Student feedback; partner university feedback

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the
Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook[4]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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