UK Business Academy

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

February 2012

Key findings about UK Business Academy

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in February 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 awards it offers on behalf of the Institute of Administrative Management.

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 programme it delivers.

Good practice

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

- webcam interviews for all overseas applicants to ensure integrity of recruitment (paragraph 2.8).

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:

- complete the implementation of all quality assurance policies and procedures (paragraph 1.2)
- improve internal verification of formative assignment briefs (paragraph 1.6)
- produce a detailed curriculum delivery plan for years two and three of the current programme (2.5)
- improve the coverage of the website and its effectiveness (paragraph 3.3).

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

- refine the teaching observation scheme (paragraph 2.6)
- provide more opportunities for students to visit employers' premises and to invite speakers from business (paragraph 2.7).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the UK Business Academy (the provider). 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 programme of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Institute of Administrative Management. The review was carried out by Mrs Kausar Malik and Mr John Skinner (reviewers) and Ms Penny Blackie (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 policies and procedures, the programme specifications, reports supplied by the provider and its awarding organisation, meetings with staff and students, and an accreditation report by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges.

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

- the Institute of Administrative Management documents, including the course structure, centre guidance, examination regulations, session plans, Accredited Centre Agreement
- the specification for accreditation by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges
- 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](#).

The UK Business Academy (the Academy) is a small college located in one campus on one floor of a building in the North West London borough of Wembley. It was formed on 9 February 2010 as a private limited company with the intention of offering a range of programmes in business and management. Although the Academy intends to offer more courses in the future, at the time of the review, it only offered one. There are currently 13 higher education students enrolled full-time on the Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management at level 6. Three full-time and five part-time staff teach on this programme. The Academy's mission is:

- 'to prepare our students to be the leaders of the next generation, by providing an education distinguished for its high level of excellence and personal attention
- to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and to educate the next generation of scholars by providing further, higher and professional study at the highest level
- to cooperate actively with public sector institutions in the development of academic knowledge for the enhancement of our teaching programmes'.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programme, listed beneath its awarding organisation and with full-time equivalent student number in brackets:

Institute of Administrative Management
- Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management (13)

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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 Academy delivers the course structure according to the programme specifications, syllabus, and examination regulations produced by the awarding organisation. Although it makes no contribution to the curriculum design, the Academy is responsible for the content of units and the learning and teaching methods. The staff, who are approved to teach by the awarding organisation, are required to ensure that all modules are covered. They ensure that students have access to the necessary learning resources and periodically provide formative assessment and evaluation by setting and marking assignments. The Academy also encourages students to provide continuous feedback on their views on teaching, learning, administration and support. All summative assessment is carried out by the awarding organisation.

Recent developments

The Academy is a relatively new provider and is also new to recent developments in higher education. It is accredited by several awarding organisations, for example, the Institute of Commercial Management, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality and City & Guilds but it is currently only delivering one course. It has plans to broaden this offer, expand student numbers and develop its own curricula for other related courses in business management so that they can be validated and accredited by the UK universities.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on the higher education programme were invited to present a submission to the review team. A student submission was submitted after a briefing about its purpose. Students on the programme met to discuss their views and the team found their submission very useful. A group of students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting in advance of the visit and a larger group participated in a meeting during the review. Their contribution was constructive and helpful.

Detailed findings about the UK Business Academy

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The UK Business Academy has a constructive arrangement with one awarding organisation, the Institute of Administrative Management, and manages its responsibilities effectively. The Accredited Centre Agreement sets out the awarding organisation's ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management. As part of the Agreement, the Academy is required to comply with the awarding organisation's regulations and procedures in relation to quality assurance, programme structure, assessment and examinations.

1.2   The Principal has overall responsibility for the management and delivery of higher education standards within the Academy. He leads a small management team of a Deputy and Vice Principal and Academic Head, who all have specific areas of responsibility. He has overall responsibility for the management and delivery of higher education standards within the Academy. An extensive hierarchy of nine management boards and committees support the Principal in fulfilling this oversight. Although the management structure is time-consuming for a small college, it has been created with a view to growth and its plans for the future rather than the current level of provision. The team saw evidence of how decisions and issues were dealt with appropriately, and sequentially, by the group of committees, for example in discussing and agreeing how to deliver the content of the award from the awarding organisation's skeleton outline of units. The relatively recent appointment of the Academic Head, with the key role of developing, monitoring and assuring the planning and delivery of the programme, is intended to help enhance academic standards within the Academy. The Quality Assurance Board, which consists of the Vice Principal and Academic Head, also contributes to the maintenance of academic standards and receives recommendations and feedback from a range of committees. The team recognises that the Academy has not yet had the opportunity to implement all of the policies and procedures they have developed and recommends that it is advisable to complete the implementation of all quality assurance policies and procedures.

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

1.3   The Academy makes effective use of various external reference points to ensure its management of academic standards, including the requirements of the awarding organisation and its relationship to the Qualifications Credit Framework, the UK Border Agency requirements, the Accreditation Service for International Colleges, the subject benchmark statements and, to a lesser extent, the precepts of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*).

1.4   The Academy has some engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, in particular *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the subject benchmark statements. While there is some awareness of the *Code of practice* as it applies to higher education, there is no formal mapping of its sections against current practice.

1.5   A Quality and Operational Manual for staff includes guidance from the UK Border Agency and the Accreditation Services for International Colleges. The Academy now adheres to the minimum requirements for a score of 5.5 in the International English

Language Testing System for prospective students. The Academy has newly accredited college status from the Accreditation Service for International Colleges. Its inspection visit and report conferred this status and identified areas for improvement for example, lateness and attendance policy, timetabling, and the registration of students with the awarding organisation. The team could see that the Academy had responded effectively to these issues.

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

1.6   The Academy implements the awarding organisation's assessment regulations effectively. Assignments are set and marked internally and moderated externally. The awarding organisation sets, administers and marks all examinations. At the time of the review, no examinations had yet taken place. There is a system of internal verification of assessment briefs and formative assessments. A delay to the start of the programme meant that only a small sample of student work was available during the review. Within the sample, there was some evidence of assignments relating to the learning outcomes of the programme, assessment criteria, double marking and formative feedback. The team considers that, although formative assignment briefs are relevant as an introduction to level 4 units, improvements in internal verification would lead to better proofreading and a clearer indication to students of the level and learning outcomes being addressed. The written feedback on the students' work was limited but the students that the team met said they received one-to-one feedback. The teaching team demonstrated an appropriate awareness of the frameworks for higher education qualifications and the levels at which the programme was to be delivered and recognised the need to build in greater complexity as the levels progress in future work.

1.7   The Academy has systems to evaluate the effectiveness of its management structures, and processes for managing standards in relation to moderation and examining. The quarterly reports and regular student feedback will be supplemented in time by an annual monitoring report. The Academy also looks forward to receiving detailed feedback from the awarding organisation on student examination performance and considers this to be an attractive feature of its association with the Institute of Administrative Management.

> 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.

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The processes described in paragraphs 1.1-1.2 provide a sound basis for the Academy's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities. The Academy undertakes regular monitoring of the quality of learning opportunities for the programme through extensive internal processes that involve all members of staff at some stage. This ensures that students satisfy the requirements of the awarding organisation's membership in order to complete their registration.

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

2.2   The Academy has a continuous dialogue with the awarding organisation which ensures that it meets its external reference points for the management and enhancement of learning opportunities in an effective way.

2.3   Familiarisation with the *Code of practice* is relatively recent but some of the precepts in its certain sections are already being adhered to. For example, the Academy takes into account some elements of the sections of the *Code of practice* on admissions, assessment of students, career education, information, and advice and guidance for disabled students. The *Code of practice*, *Section* 2: *Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* is informing early discussions on progression with the UK universities.

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

2.4   The Academy has a teaching and learning strategy which has yet to be fully implemented. Committees oversee the planning and quality of teaching and learning. Teaching staff take responsibility for planning and delivery of content and will now be supported by the new post of Academic Head to enhance and maintain the quality of teaching and learning.

2.5   In recognition of the learning needs of its international students, the first year curriculum is delivered largely through lectures and discussion, and the intention is that students will gradually become more independent. The team considers that the delayed start and the consequent reduction in the coverage of units during 2011-12, will need careful management of the delivery of the remaining units. It is advisable that the Academy produces a detailed curriculum delivery plan for years two and three of the current programme.

2.6   A teaching observation scheme is in place but it is desirable that the scheme is further refined. At present, it is implemented by senior staff observing more junior members. The only observation so far has not been used to identify clear areas for development for the member of staff reviewed. The team recommends as desirable that the Academy considers implementing a higher education peer review system.

2.7   Students stated that the teaching and learning methods meet their needs and they believe they have ample opportunity to contribute their views, formally and informally. The Academy provides a variety of channels for student feedback, including direct access to the Principal and their tutors, and all appropriate committees have student representatives. Student views and recommendations are taken into consideration at the Board of Studies and conveyed to the senior management team for appropriate action. In their feedback, students suggested that their learning could be enhanced by more direct links with employers. The team agrees with this and recommends as desirable that the Academy provides more opportunities for students to visit employers' premises and invites speakers from business to participate in the programme delivery. Students also believe that both educational and extra-curricular day trips would improve opportunities to enhance the achievement of learning outcomes and opportunities for employment.

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

2.8   Effective academic and pastoral support is available to students before they enrol and by appointment with programme tutors. The student support policy identifies the key

areas for support and the management committees carry out regular reviews. Considerable care is given to the admissions process in terms of students academic suitability and performance in English. The Administration and Admission Department oversees the admissions procedures and works closely with all visa applications. The Academy undertakes webcam interviews for all overseas applicants. This avoids confusion, helps to manage prospective students' expectations and enables the Academy to recruit with integrity, which the team considers to be good practice. The Academy has newly accredited college status from the Accreditation Service for International Colleges. Prior to the start of the programme, all students undertake a week's intensive induction programme which they value. Staff provide full explanations of the Student Handbook and Induction Book distributed during this period.

2.9   Following lectures, staff provide academic support to ensure that students fully understand the content of lectures, some of it on a one-to-one basis. A dedicated welfare officer assesses requests for support in financial, social and health matters and refers students to the appropriate agency. The current small number of students appreciate the academic and pastoral care and support they receive.

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

2.10   The Academy sets out to promote and encourage a positive framework for personal and professional development in upgrading and updating staff skills, and has started to achieve this successfully. Training plans for staff aim to equip them to deliver programmes under development, and enable staff to gain teacher training qualifications.

2.11   The Academy has recruited well qualified and experienced staff whose appointments are approved by the awarding organisation.The part-time tutors also teach in other colleges and use the opportunity to share good practice with them. There are planned procedures for annual staff performance review, supported by a periodic portfolio review, which contains details of scholarly activity and training undertaken. These procedures are not yet being fully implemented because the Academy is new. One member of staff, with support from the Academy, has been accepted to undertake a doctorate. The Academy supports attendance at external training events in terms of funding and the allocation of time. Continuous professional development and induction policies also support staff and new staff are assigned a mentor.

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

2.12   The Academy effectively ensures that adequate learning and teaching resources are available to meet the needs of students. Students have access to a learning resource room that provides sufficient texts, including those prescribed by the awarding organisation. Following student requests, the suite of computers now provides satisfactory internet access. Students consider that it would be useful if the Academy broadens the range of books and relevant periodicals available and the team agreed. Students are able to access teaching and learning programme resources and information online at any time using their Institute of Administrative Management membership.

> 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   The Academy and the awarding organisation effectively share responsibility for the production and publication of materials relating to this programme. As an accredited centre, the Academy is permitted to use the logo of the Institute of Administrative Management on its publicity materials and its website. An appropriate range of public information includes promotional information for prospective students, such as student handbooks, available only in hard copy, and a programme handbook which the awarding organisation supplies. The awarding organisation's material, which is made available to students at induction, is online and includes past papers and case studies as well as the programme specifications. Plans are under way to introduce a newsletter, produced by staff and students, to improve students' writing skills. The Academy also produces a comprehensive Quality and Operational Manual for the benefit of staff. It has been designed to help everyone involved in the delivery and management of the Academy's higher education programmes. It clearly shows who is responsible for the current programme and how the Academy's regulations and quality assurance are intended to operate.

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

3.2   Adequate checking arrangements operate to assure the accuracy and completeness of the Academy's information. The responsibility for all external information and publicity and its accuracy lies with the Vice Principal who reports to the Principal. The process is also monitored by the Deputy Principal whose role includes Head of Quality. This process has worked well for the production of the generic Student Handbook which provides detailed information on the Academy's policies, rules and regulations and clear guidance for international students on UK Border Agency requirements and how the Academy will monitor them. The students commented on the clarity and usefulness of the information as a comprehensive induction to living in the UK.

3.3   The website is produced by an external company with the Academy providing the content, which is subjected to the same control procedures described in paragraph 3.2. Until very recently there had been two websites which resulted in some confusing and conflicting information on the programme available. This duplication has now been rectified. Since the new website is still under development, it does not yet have detailed information on the programme on offer. There is no live link yet to the awarding organisation, the disclaimer page and general terms and conditions page, but the redesigned website will include these. The student written submission and the meeting with students confirmed that the general information that they received from the website and other publications provided an accurate picture of what they expected and had experienced. The website is poorly designed and difficult to navigate at present with no consideration for users with visual impairment. The team recommends that it is advisable for the Academy to improve the coverage of the website and its effectiveness.

> 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]

UK Business Academy action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight February 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:						
• webcam interviews for all overseas applicants to ensure integrity of recruitment (paragraph 2.8).	Webcam interviews for all overseas applicants to ensure integrity of recruitment	30 June 2013	Admission and Human Resource Committee	A significant reduction in the number of students admitted with English language difficulties	Vice Principal (Head of Quality Control and Administration)	Number of successful students evaluated by the Head of Quality Assurance and Academic Head in a meeting of the Quality Control Board
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:						
• complete the implementation of all quality assurance policies and	Complete the implementation of all outstanding quality assurance policies	30 June 2013	Quality Assurance Board	All quality assurance policies and procedures	Vice Principal (Head of Quality Control and Administration)	Annual review and evaluation of all policies and procedures at the

[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.

procedures (paragraph 1.2)	and procedures and make any necessary changes			implemented, tested and reviewed Where necessary, refinements made There will be no gaps in the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures		meetings of the Academic and Quality Control Boards There will be an annual review of all the policies and procedures by the Academic and Quality Assurance Boards
• improve internal verification of formative assignment briefs (paragraph 1.6)	Improve internal verification of formative assignment briefs by making them more rigorous	30 June 2013	Board of Studies in the first stage, then endorsed by the Academic Board	Internal verification of all assignment briefs that meet learning outcomes More detailed feedback on students' work	Academic Head	Evaluated through students' feedback, surveys and tutors' comments through Annual Monitoring Review Reports
• produce a detailed curriculum delivery plan for years two and three of the current programme (paragraph 2.5)	Produce a detailed curriculum delivery plan for years two and three of the current programme	30 June 2013	Board of Studies in the first stage, then endorsed by Academic Board	Clear session plans produced for years two and three of the current programme Students will become more independent and work effectively in peer groups	Academic Head	The plans will be initiated by the teaching and learning committees and will be reviewed and evaluated by the Board of Studies and the Academic Board

• improve the coverage of the website and its effectiveness (paragraph 3.3).	Academy intends to improve the coverage of the website and its effectiveness by changing its contents	30 August 2012	Marketing Committee	The website will have a new design and changed look Positive students' feedback about the website	Principal	Student responses will be measured and evaluated by the Marketing Committee and the Directorate
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• refine the teaching observation scheme (paragraph 2.6)	Improve and refine the teaching observation scheme by making it shorter, more developmental and more effective Teaching staff will be observed every two months	30 September 2012	Board of Studies first, then endorsed by Academic Board	Recorded opportunities for staff to enhance their development and share good practice Improved quality of teaching	Academic Head	Monitoring and evaluating staff development records through Annual Monitoring Review Evaluating the outcomes of student surveys Comparing success rates of students for different periods
• provide more opportunities for students to visit employers' premises and to invite speakers from	Increased more opportunities for students to visit employers' premises Invite speakers from	30 October 2012	Board of Studies and the Teaching and Learning Committees	The integration of industrial practice with academic learning through visits to employers	Academic Head	Evaluated by analysing the results of formative and summative assessments

business (paragraph 2.7).	businesses on a regular basis			Students will have the opportunity to acquire practical knowledge of businesses At least two speakers invited per year, per programme Students will have a better understanding of real life expectations in the business world		Students' feedback after guest visitors evaluated as part of the Annual Monitoring Report

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.