Leeds Professional College

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

April 2012

Key findings about Leeds Professional College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in April 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 University of Derby, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Chartered Management Institute, Edexcel, the Institute of Administrative Management, National Computing Centre and 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 these awarding bodies and organisations.

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.

Recommendations

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

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

- ensure that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee operates in accordance with its terms of reference (paragraphs 1.2 and 2.1)
- provide an annual monitoring report for all higher education programmes, based on the comprehensive template developed by the College (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.1)
- adopt a more formal process for considering and responding to external verifiers' reports (paragraph 1.7)
- develop a learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 2.3).

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

- continue to update the progression and completion statistics (paragraph 1.4)
- continue to use the mapping exercise for the use of external reference points (paragraph 1.5)
- continue to enhance the staff development activities (paragraph 2.9)
- continue to develop the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.11).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Leeds Professional College (the provider; the College). 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 the University of Derby, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Chartered Management Institute, Edexcel, the Institute of Administrative Management, the National Computer Centre and NCFE. The review was carried out by Dr Tommie Anderson-Jaquest, Mr Dan Morgan, Professor Danny Morton (reviewers), and Mr Philip Markey (coordinator).

The 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 a range of College documents such as progression data, the awarding bodies and organisations' reports, and meetings with staff and students. During the visit, the College presented the team with recently produced or updated documentation on areas such as assessment, appraisal, student facilities and learning resources. The team also scrutinised samples of student work.

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

* the Academic Infrastructure
* the guidelines provided by the awarding bodies and organisations.

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

Leeds Unique Educations Ltd was established in May 2006 and started trading as Leeds Professional College (the College) in March 2007. Its principal aim is to provide international students with the opportunities to study a range of professional programmes in the UK. The College is situated in a new building a few miles from Leeds city centre. There are 306 full-time international students.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding bodies and organisations with full-time equivalent students (FTEs) in brackets:

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
* Certificate (28) (phasing out in 2012)

Chartered Management Institute
* Diploma in Management and Leadership (level 4) (27)
* Diploma in Management and Leadership (level 5) (nine)
* Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (level 7) (75)

Edexcel
* HND in Business Management (level 5) (81)

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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.

Institute of Administrative Management
- Extended Diploma in Business and Management (level 6) (four)

National Computing Centre
- Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Business Information Technology (level 7) (one)

Northern Council for Further Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Health and Social Care Management (level 7) (36)

University of Derby
- International Foundation Programme (47) (phasing out in 2012)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College provided responsibility checklists for each awarding body and organisation. Its responsibilities in all programmes include: recruitment and selection, monitoring student retention and completion, staff development, learning and teaching, student support, and learning resources. The College is also responsible for student appeals and collecting and acting upon student feedback/opinion, as well as for public information, including programme and module information, the prospectus and the website. In the case of programmes from the Chartered Management Institute and Edexcel, the College is responsible for setting, marking and moderating assignments and providing feedback to students.

Recent developments

The College moved into new premises in 2010. A new Principal was appointed in 2011. The College has had to reduce the number of teaching staff because of reduction in the number of students recruited by the College, following changes to immigration regulations in 2011.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. A brief written submission based on interviews with 15 students was produced by a student representative. It was approved by the students who met the team during the visit. The students confirmed that the views expressed in the submission reflected their own evaluations.

Detailed findings about Leeds Professional College

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The College is in the process of embedding a system for the management of academic standards. It has produced a Quality Assurance Policy document. There is an emerging management structure which separates out the administration and academic functions. Management staff have designated responsibilities for recruitment, assessment, student liaison, admissions, and data management. The College's Principal is chiefly responsible for academic standards. Course leaders are appointed to manage the requirements of the awarding bodies and organisations and to liaise with external verifiers regarding the delivery and maintenance of academic standards.

1.2   The College recently established the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, which oversees the Boards of Examiners, an Attendance Committee and a Student Misconduct Committee. Prior to its formation, quality matters were discussed at a less formal staff meeting, whose membership included the Principal and other members of staff associated with programme administration and delivery. The terms of reference for the Committee clearly demonstrate that it has a key role in addressing academic standards and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. They provide a solid basis for the management of academic standards within the College. However, minutes from the first four meetings do not entirely show it is operating according to its terms of reference. The team considers it is advisable for the College to ensure that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee operates in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.3   Currently, the only annual monitoring undertaken for programmes of study are the annual reports produced by external verifiers on behalf of the awarding bodies and organisations. The College itself has no means of annually monitoring and reviewing its programmes in respect of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. During the visit, the College presented a comprehensive annual monitoring report pro forma, which addressed issues such as recruitment, retention, achievement, programme developments, and external examiners' comments. This will form the basis for a rigorous annual report. The College also presented a module evaluation form, which has been designed to review the delivery and assessment of each module of study on the respective programmes. The team considers it advisable for the College to provide an annual monitoring report for all higher education programmes based on the comprehensive template developed by the College.

1.4   Progression statistics produced by the College give a record of those students currently studying, those for which an award had been made, and those who had withdrawn from study. The statistics initially presented were inaccurate, because of a wrong calculation and, consequently, gave a poor picture of student progression within the College. However, these were rectified during the visit and staff were able to give a clear explanation of the figures presented. The team considers it desirable that the College continues to update its progression and achievement statistics.

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

1.5   The College recognises the importance of the Academic Infrastructure. During the visit, the College produced a mapping of its systems and processes against the aspects of

the Academic Infrastructure. This provided evidence that the College's processes for managing academic standards are informed by the Academic Infrastructure. The mapping gives a sound basis against which both the management team and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee can monitor the performance of the College against external reference points. The team considers that it is desirable for the College to continue to use the mapping exercise for the use of external reference points.

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

1.6   The College operates an internal verification policy for assessments, which is clearly explained within the College's Quality Assurance and Moderation Policy document. Internal verification has previously been criticised by Edexcel external verifiers. On the basis of student work examined by the team, there was evidence of samples of work being second-marked and verified by staff. The process of internal verification is now working well in the College. The marking of coursework was also demonstrated to be thorough. The assignment briefs addressed learning outcomes and adequate feedback was given to students.

1.7   The only reference points that the College has about the academic health of its programmes of study are the reports received from external verifiers. While follow-on external verifiers' reports provide evidence that the College has responded to issues, there is no formal process for considering and responding to these reports. The team considers it advisable that the College adopts a formal process for considering and responding to external verifiers' reports.

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 body and organisations.

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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   Paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4 provide statements about the management of academic standards. These also apply to the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.

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

2.2   Paragraph 1.5 identifies how the College engages with external reference points. This also applies to the management and enhancement of learning opportunities.

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

2.3   Currently, the College does not have a learning and teaching strategy. A number of initiatives have recently begun to inform teaching and learning, including regular academic staff meetings to discuss issues, enhancement activities and a new teaching observation process. The College is aware of the issues involved in teaching students whose first language is not English. It also recognises the need for more materials to support study

skills. None of these initiatives are documented so that they can be shared by staff. The team considers it advisable that the College develops a learning and teaching strategy.

2.4   The College has begun to institute end-of-module and end-of-course reports that will inform the new Annual Monitoring Report identified in its Quality Assurance Policy. To fulfil one of its strategic aims, the College has introduced a new teaching observation and appraisal scheme. This is operating successfully. The outcomes of the new processes for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching will be reported to the Quality and Enhancement Committee.

2.5   Students are very positive about their learning experiences. They comment that staff deploy diverse teaching methods that encourage them to participate in the learning process. The College operates a number of mechanisms to receive feedback from students. It has begun to use mid and end-of-course feedback forms. There is an electronic feedback method through the website and student-only meetings facilitated by course representatives that have begun to provide useful information to the staff. Course representatives have been appointed. The College is responsive to the feedback from students.

2.6   The College ensures staff are eligible and appropriate to teach on programmes offered by the respective awarding bodies and organisations. There is no dedicated policy on the recruitment of staff to teach on higher education programmes. However, the College recruits well qualified teaching staff who, wherever possible, have professional experience relevant to the programme areas.

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

2.7   The College provides an effective support system for students at all stages of their time at the College. It takes careful account of the international student profile. Clear guidance is provided on the expectations in using the English language. Additional English support classes are made available to students. The College has an admissions policy statement which offers clear guidance to staff. Students are also informed about this in the student handbook and prospectus. They have an initial interview with the admissions team and are introduced to the Student Liaison Officer on arrival at the College. They have a full-day induction. Lecturers operate a tutorial system that allows for weekly meetings with students. Students are positive about the support they receive from the College at the admissions stage through enrolment, induction, on their course of study and for careers. Students are well informed about assessments, including academic appeals. There is a clear plagiarism policy that is regularly reinforced in documentation.

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

2.8   There is a staff development policy. All staff are expected to participate in the annual cycle of appraisal and professional development, which informs the college-wide and individual staff development needs. The College encourages staff to complete at least 30 hours per year on staff development activity. Three members of the teaching staff who have no formal teaching qualification are at present studying towards a teaching qualification diploma.

2.9   The College recognises that it would like to see more staff development sessions where emphasis is on the quality of teaching and learning with reference to higher education. The College intends to establish a series of developmental activities. There is evidence of recent staff development activity which is being monitored, although not all staff have their activities recorded. The team considers it desirable that the College continues to enhance its staff development activity.

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

2.10 The College is in the process of developing its learning resources. It occupies modern premises on the periphery of the city centre and provides excellent classrooms, offices and study spaces. The building includes library facilities and a fully computerised resource management system. Students are provided with sufficient computers with appropriate software. They have sufficient access to these resources. The College recognises deficiencies in its library resources. The library itself is not well stocked with key texts relevant for the programmes. The College helps to overcome this shortage by the use of the city library. The feedback mechanisms deployed by the College include reference to learning resources. Students reported that they are satisfied with the arrangements.

2.11 A virtual learning environment is used to varying degrees by some staff, but it is not developed for all programmes. Staff development is planned to ensure a more comprehensive approach to its implementation. Where students do have access to resources on the virtual learning environment, they report very favourably about its usefulness. The College acknowledges that it needs to expand the virtual learning environment resources for all programmes to compensate for the shortage of library books and journals. The team considers it desirable that the College continues to develop its virtual learning environment.

> 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 College is effective in communicating with students and other stakeholders about its higher education provision. Its prospectus, leaflets and website provide comprehensive and accurate information. The College is responsible for publishing admissions requirements, programme specifications, assessment particulars and progression regulations stipulated by the various accrediting institutions. The College is responsible for publishing its own internal policies, procedures, regulations and recruitment information. The College Administrator has responsibilities for ensuring that all information published is accurate, complete and current.

3.2 These responsibilities are currently discharged effectively with the College aware of the balance of responsibilities between itself and the awarding bodies and organisations. To ensure that students receive the requisite balance of information, for example, the College handbooks are divided into two distinct sections. One is devoted to the accrediting institutions' requirements, while the other is focused upon the College's expectations.

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

3.3   The College has formal procedures for ensuring that information provided to students, staff members and the general public is accurate, complete and current. The College Administrator prepares the first draft of publication, circulates copies to members of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee for comments, collects the edited copies and prepares the second draft of publication. The draft is submitted to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee for scrutiny and final approval. Thereafter, the College Administrator is responsible for implementing all publication arrangements. Procedures apply equally to hard copy and electronic material.

3.4   The College operates an intranet site popularly known as the 'student blackboard', that has been designed to facilitate student-centred learning. Site content is substantial and fit for purpose. Students have access to programme information, unit materials, College regulations, personal records and other pertinent information. Student feedback on the intranet's value is positive. The College Administrator, in collaboration with module leaders, ensures that information is accurate, complete and current. In respect of new lecturers, the College Administrator and the Facilitator confirm that all new lecturers are informed of intranet procedures and housekeeping requirements in formal induction sessions provided by the College. Policies and procedures aimed at facilitating staff efforts to manage unit data on the website are not currently set out in the staff handbook, but the addition of a relevant section could be useful.

3.5   Efforts are under way to transfer student intranet facilities onto a virtual learning platform by September 2012. This step strengthens prospects for introducing a more extensive virtual learning environment mentioned in the College's self-evaluation document.

3.6   Responsibilities for managing information on the public website are shared between the College and the website provider, according to contractual agreement. The website provider must place approved information on the web pages, but staff members in the College have opportunities to review and amend updates before they become live. The College advocates a three-month review policy or on an as and when required basis to ensure that information placed upon internet and intranet sites is updated regularly and remains fit for purpose.

3.7   The calibre of published material in hard copy prepared by the College Administrator, approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and published by the College, is professional and informative. Material provided in relation to programme and College requirements is accurate. A variety of hard copy materials is produced and regularly updated in accordance with the College's requirements. These include the College's Prospectus, student and staff handbooks, college-wide policies and procedures, and information produced by the awarding bodies and organisations.

3.8   The effectiveness of existing arrangements can only be measured by implementing a continuous process of systematic review within the College and taking the feedback provided by the various users firmly into account. According to the College Administrator and the Facilitator, a review system, built on the premise of three months, is in place and is working effectively. Positive responses given in the student meetings support these statements.

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]

Leeds Professional College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight April 2012						
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:						
• ensure that the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee operates in accordance with its terms of reference (paragraphs 1.2 and 2.1)	Carefully monitor the operation of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to ensure compliance with its terms of references	Before external verifier visit End of each academic year (April)	Course leaders and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members	Execution of Action plan presented by course leaders and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members to address recommendations raised in external verifier reports and review reports Monitoring of student support and experience using student feedback forms	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	Following external examiner reports and review reports with 'Met recommendations', annually review the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee including consideration of external verifiers reports and ensuring recommendations are met Check the processes are following the terms of reference
• provide an annual monitoring report for all higher education	All higher education programmes will be monitored annually	December 2012 December	Course leaders	Annual monitoring reports completed for each year	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Analysis of annual report

[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 bodies and organisations.

programmes, based on the comprehensive template developed by the College (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.1)	using the comprehensive template developed by the College Comparison with external verifiers reports	2013 December 2014			Committee	Review and analysis of annual monitoring report on completion of each programme Comparison with external verifier reports
• adopt a more formal process for considering and responding to external verifiers' reports (paragraph 1.7)	Addressing recommendations raised in external verifier reports and review reports	Dec 2012	Course leaders and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members	Ensure that all recommendations and actions are checked and signed off	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	Thoroughly review the external verifier process annually and include conclusions in annual monitoring report
• develop a learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 2.3).	Develop, approve, implement and monitor a learning and teaching strategy	Completed June 2012	Course leaders and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members	Use student evaluations and outcomes of staff observation of teaching to indicate success on the learning and teaching policy	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	Final and approved draft of learning and teaching policy and monitoring its effectiveness
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:						
• continue to update the progression and completion statistics	Updating of the records in the retention and	December 2012 Ongoing	Course leaders and Database Manager	Statistical analysis sheet of each programme at the	Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Compiled and approved copy of retentions and

(paragraph 1.4)	achievement manual and the statistical data			end of each update	Committee	achievement manual
• continue to use the mapping exercise for the use of external reference points (paragraph 1.5)	Mapping Leeds Professional College policies with the awarding organisations guidelines and UK Quality Code for Higher Education	April 2013	Course leaders and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members	How the annual monitoring report indicates how the external reference points are taken account of in areas such as admissions, assessment, student support and external examining	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	Updated and approved mapping exercise document
• continue to enhance the staff development activities (paragraph 2.9)	Upgrade staff development activities programme	Ongoing	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members	All staff having comprehensive continuing professional development programme	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	Staff annual appraisals
• continue to develop the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.11).	Promoting and developing the virtual learning environment by providing guidelines for what should be included on the virtual learning environment	Sep 2013	Ad-hoc media team and academic staff	Student evaluations and staff monitoring	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	Online existence of learning materials and measuring usage

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 1 to 8, with levels 4 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.