



# **City of London College**

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

May 2012

## Key findings about City of London College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in May 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 Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Birmingham City University, Edexcel, the University of Greenwich, the University of London and the University of Wales.

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 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 system of peer tutoring pairs lower and high-performing students to support underperforming students' learning (paragraph 2.11).

## 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:

- revise and clarify the committee structure to ensure that it reflects current college practice accurately (paragraph 1.4)
- review the College's internal verification policy and the procedures for providing feedback to students on their assignments to ensure that they fully align with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.10)
- designate one committee or group to have oversight of the academic standards of the College's provision (paragraph 1.5)
- ensure that there are full and accurate records of all its formal meetings (paragraph 2.2)
- ensure that the contents of annual monitoring reports are more comprehensive, evaluative and respond to the external examiners' reports (paragraph 2.4)
- formalise the checking and signing off of all public information (paragraph 3.3).

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

- review its procedures for considering statistical data for its programmes (paragraph 2.3)
- further enhance the teaching and learning experience for small cohorts of students (paragraph 2.6)
- introduce a formal system to encourage personal development planning and to record the discussions of tutors' meetings with individual students on their academic progress and pastoral care (paragraph 2.10).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the City of London 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 Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Birmingham City University, Edexcel, the University of Greenwich, the University of London and the University of Wales. The review was carried out by Ms Ana Almeida, Mr Vinay Kanani and Dr Victoria Lindsay (reviewers), and Mr Robert Hodgkinson (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included: agreements with the awarding bodies and organisation, programme documents, College and awarding bodies and organisation's policies, procedures and manuals, a quality assurance handbook, a diagram of the College's committee structure, reports on the quality of provision, minutes of key committee meetings, a sample of student work, and meetings with staff and students.

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

- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants programme documentation
- Accreditation Service for International Colleges institutional accreditation and inspection documentation
- British Accreditation Council's accreditation and institutional report
- Birmingham City University accreditation and programme documentation
- Edexcel programme documentation
- the Academic Infrastructure
- University of Greenwich accreditation and programme documentation
- University of London accreditation and programme documentation
- University of Wales accreditation and programme documentation.

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

The City of London College (the College) was established in London in 1979 and is a long established provider of education and training. In 2011, it received the Queens' Award for Enterprise in recognition of its long-standing contribution to international education in the UK. It has occupied its current modern building since 2006. This has been decorated and fitted out to provide an attractive environment within which to deliver its educational provision. The current campus is located near the centre of Aldgate, Central London. It provides 15,000 square feet of accommodation distributed over three floors that include lecture rooms, an information technology suite and library. In addition, ample social space is provided for student recreation. The College is a private institution with three shareholders. Most of the teaching staff are full-time. There are 482 full-time higher education students currently registered at the College.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4).

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding bodies and organisation, with the full-time student numbers in brackets as follows:

**Association of Chartered Certified Accountants**

- ACCA Fundamentals/Skills/Professional (50)
- Certified Accounting Technician (17)

**Birmingham City University**

- BA (Hons) International Business/Finance (Top-up) (14)
- Master of Business Administration (Top-up) (7)

**Edexcel**

- Higher National Diploma in Business (Accounting/Information Technology/Finance/Law/Management) (51)
- Higher National Diploma in Computing (General/Systems Development) (70)
- Higher National Diploma in Health and Social Care (54)
- Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management/Travel and Tourism (6)
- Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (Extended) (6)

**University of Greenwich**

- BSc (Hons) in Computing/Business Information Technology (Top-up) (8)

**University of London**

- Diploma in Economics (2)
- BSc Accounting and Finance (Second Year) (4)
- BSc Economics (3)
- BSc Economics and Management (Final Year) (2)
- BSc Management (1)

**University of Wales**

- BA (Hons) Business Administration (2)
- BA Tourism Management (Top-up) (2)
- BSc (Hons) Business (All pathways) (145)
- BSc (Hons) International Tourism Management (Air Travel/Hospitality) (35)
- Master of Business Administration (All Pathways) (49)
- MSc Computing (All Pathways) (5)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The College has gained approval from six awarding partners to offer a variety of named programmes of study leading to external awards. These are as listed above. It also offers programmes provided by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation recognises the latter's programmes of study as operating within its Qualifications and Credit Framework. In 2007, the Accreditation Service for International Colleges awarded the College Premier College status until November 2011. It has not yet returned to recertify the provision. In 2008, the College was fully inspected by the British Accreditation Council.

The College's responsibilities vary slightly according to the requirements of each awarding body or organisation and for each of the programmes that it offers. The programmes including their specifications are designed by the College and validated and moderated annually by its respective awarding partners. Each awarding body or organisation provides

the policies, procedures and regulations that prescribe the College's obligations in delivering the programmes. Its stated responsibilities for the awarding bodies and organisation's programmes are for their delivery, the quality of teaching and learning, application of the awarding bodies and organisation's standards, regular internal monitoring of quality and compliance with the awarding bodies and organisation's requirements for inspection or review. In addition, the College is expected to meet a range of criteria that include health and safety requirements, learning resources provision, facilities, teaching staff qualifications, student welfare, and entry qualifications.

The College is a recognised Centre for Edexcel qualifications. The College sets and marks assignments according to Edexcel criteria.

## **Recent developments**

In January 2012, the University of Wales decided to restructure its relationship with the colleges that offer its awards. The College has received formal notification that its current relationship with the University of Wales will terminate. As part of the reorganisation process, the College is allowed to recruit students until May 2014, with these students completing their programmes of study on or before May 2017.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on the higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. The College's lead student representative prepared the submission to accord with the guidelines provided by QAA. For the preparation of this report a team of six student representatives met to discuss issues of concern and possible recommendations. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information to help write the report. The main areas of focus for writing the report were identified. Evidence was taken from the responses to past mid-term student evaluation questionnaires. A list of areas upon which students were expected to focus was sent out to all student representatives for their response. The lead student representative summarised all of the responses to form the basis of the submission. The team met 14 student representatives from the programmes during the review and their evidence helped to clarify their impressions of the provision.

## Detailed findings about City of London College

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College's responsibilities are clearly defined in its agreements with its university partners. They are also set out in the handbooks and other documentation relating to the delivery of the programmes. The College's responsibilities differ slightly with each partnership.

1.2 The College is a recognised centre for the delivery and assessment of Edexcel and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants programmes. For the Edexcel programmes, the College is responsible for writing and internally verifying assessment materials and for the marking and internal verification of student work. Students on the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants programmes are provided with course material from the professional body. They sit external examinations and the role of the College is to provide tutorial support.

1.3 Generally, the College has responded to the reports of its awarding bodies and organisation, but there are still outstanding issues. The British Accreditation Council's most recent report requires the College to review its organisational chart and use statistics to enable comparisons of student success rates over time. The Accreditation Service for International Colleges recommends the College to provide feedback on college-set assignments. The feedback is often limited and of variable quality, and the College does not fully engage with the relevant precepts of *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*), Section 6: *Assessment of students*.

1.4 The processes for the delegation of responsibility for academic standards are not well defined or articulated. The Director of Quality Assurance is responsible for embedding policies and procedures throughout the College and aligning them with the *Code of practice* and other relevant benchmarks. The role of the Director of Quality Assurance is hampered by the lack of a coherent committee structure that currently does not give quality assurance a central role within the College. The College's organisational chart and the terms of reference of its committees and decision-making groups do not fully reflect the current division of roles and responsibilities. The Quality Assurance Group is a key committee for maintaining standards, but operates as an informal group. The Board of Governors and the staff meetings have no terms of reference. Programme teams review their courses in isolation in conjunction with each awarding body or organisation. The College is advised to revise and clarify the committee structure to ensure that it reflects current college practice accurately.

1.5 There is no mechanism, committee or group designated with the responsibility for reviewing the entirety of the College's provision to allow common themes, actions or good practice to be identified. The College is advised to designate one committee or group to have oversight of the academic standards of the College's provision.

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

1.6 Generally, the College relies on its awarding partners to maintain academic standards. The awarding bodies and organisation confirm that the College complies with

their criteria for the organisation and administration of the programmes, the provision of teaching and facilities and providing support to students. University documentation aligns with *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). Student handbooks, programme regulations and supporting documentation detail the content of and the obligations for the delivery of the programmes. Where programme development is undertaken together with the awarding body or organisation, as for example with the University of Wales, the relevant subject benchmark statements inform the curriculum. The programmes meet the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*.

1.7 Students on university programmes and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants programme are provided with comprehensive handbooks that have been developed in conjunction with university partners. Student handbooks provide programme specifications that align with *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*. Students on the Edexcel and Association of Chartered Certified Accountants programmes receive a college-developed student handbook. Each programme has its own appeals and complaints policies that align with the precepts of the *Code of practice*.

1.8 The processes for external review are robust. Each university undertakes a periodic review for the renewal of the partnership. The University of London undertakes an Institution Periodic Review visit.

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

1.9 The College delivers franchised programmes on behalf of Birmingham City University and the University of Greenwich. In the Birmingham City University agreement the College is responsible for writing assignments and examinations that are approved by the University. The University of Greenwich has recently modified its agreement with the College. The College is now responsible for the setting of assessments. College tutors mark the examination scripts, which are moderated by the University. For the University of Wales provision, the College is responsible for writing and obtaining external examiners' approval for all assessment materials. For the University of London programmes the College is provided with all teaching and learning materials and examinations are taken externally at University of London approved centres.

1.10 The College's internal verification system and the feedback to students on their assignments need further development. Procedures are set out in the College's Quality Assurance Manual, including an assessment policy for its non-university programmes. A number of adequately developed policies, including appeals guidelines on malpractice and plagiarism, provide guidance for staff and students on the conduct of assessment. The internal verification process could be developed further to ensure that there is more effective standardisation of the processes of assessment and verification of assessor decisions. The quality of feedback given to students varies. Some feedback is thorough and uses a template to support effective learning. Other feedback is limited, handwritten on scripts and non-developmental. It is advisable that the College reviews its internal verification policy and the procedures for providing feedback to students on their assignments to ensure that they align fully with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*.

1.11 The College link tutors and course leaders provide effective channels of communication with the awarding bodies and organisation. Course leaders are responsible for disseminating information to all programme team members. The College's Course Leader for the University of Greenwich programmes attends all examination board meetings

at the University. The college-based examination boards are attended by external examiners, moderators and the University.

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 bodies and 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 responsibilities for the management of the quality of learning opportunities and reporting arrangements reflect those in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5. The College's policies, including those for staff recruitment, appraisal, assessment, administration, management of lectures, teaching and class observation, are evolving.

2.2 The team noted that there are no minutes for some of the committees and others are extremely brief. The College also has responsibility for taking the minutes of the examination boards that it runs on behalf of the University of Wales. These are insufficiently comprehensive. Staff meetings are used to make decisions that affect the quality of learning and academic standards but the record of their content is limited. The minutes of College meetings do not provide a comprehensive record of discussions and events. It is advisable for the College to ensure that there are full and accurate records of all its formal meetings.

2.3 As they are received by the College, the Director of Studies reviews the annual monitoring reports for each programme and considers each external examiner's report. The annual monitoring reports provide the College with data and statistics for individual programmes. However, this data is not currently collated to provide any college committee with an overview of student recruitment, retention, progression and achievement. The College does not undertake any comparison of data between programmes and cohorts or any trend analysis. It is desirable that the College reviews its procedures for considering statistical data for its programmes.

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

2.4 The external reference points mentioned in paragraphs 1.7 to 1.9 also apply to the quality of learning opportunities. Further development is needed to implement awarding bodies and organisation's requirements. The university partners require the College to undertake an evaluative annual monitoring report and action plan which reflects on programme issues and evaluates arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement. The College receives copies of all external examiners' reports and subsequent responses are discussed with the programme teams within the College. Annual reports are completed by programme committees and approved by the Director of Studies. They include some analysis of data relating to student success and an action plan which is expected to contain responses to external examiners' comments. This process is completed for all College programmes. No evidence was provided of annual monitoring for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and Edexcel programmes. The annual monitoring reports completed by the College do not always fully reflect individual programme content and are not particularly evaluative. Action plans are not always linked to external examiners' comments and do not align fully with precepts of *Chapter B7: External examining* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). It is advisable that the College



ensures that the contents of annual monitoring reports are more appropriate, evaluative and respond to the external examiners' reports.

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

2.5 The programme specifications provided by the awarding bodies and organisation detail the teaching and learning strategies for each programme and align with *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants offers well prescribed and comprehensive information for use by tutors. All tutors are expected to reflect the context and interests of the students, to use a range of teaching methods and classroom-based activities and to engage in methods of delivery that involve active learning. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants offer well prescribed and comprehensive information for use by tutors. Tutors are expected to reflect the context and interests of the students, to use a range of teaching methods and classroom-based activities, and to engage in methods of delivery that involve active learning.

2.6 The quality of the learning opportunities for small cohorts of students needs improvement. As the number of students studying at the College declines, there are a number of small cohorts of students studying particular programmes. The student experience for these small cohorts is less satisfactory than that provided to larger student groups. Teaching styles could better reflect the group size, for example, in providing seminar-style discussions. While the College continues to run these programmes, it is desirable that it further enhances the teaching and learning experience for small cohorts of students.

2.7 The monitoring of the quality of teaching is adequate. Teaching staff are expected to prepare lesson plans to ensure that intended learning outcomes are addressed and are congruent with the specifications provided by the awarding bodies and organisation. The choice of teaching method is at the discretion of the tutor. In line with its policies and procedures, the College is expected to monitor the effectiveness of teaching by considering the results of teaching observations and evaluations. There is a peer observation policy and, when required, a formal lesson observation is undertaken by the Principal. No criteria currently inform the observation policies, but the team considers them fit for purpose. Both types of observation are considered as part of an annual performance review.

2.8 Student feedback contributes towards the maintenance of the quality of learning opportunities. It is obtained through mid-module surveys. Students on the university collaborative provision also take part in university-wide surveys and, if appropriate, the National Student Survey. The results of these are analysed by each programme leader. Their reports are analysed at staff meetings, the Academic Board and Course Review meetings.

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

2.9 Student recruitment is the responsibility of the College. Once recruited, depending on the programme of study, students are also required to complete an additional registration process with the College's university partners. The admissions and registration policies are clear and align with the *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education*.

2.10 Student support is provided both formally and informally to meet students' requirements. Each student is allocated a personal tutor, and can also obtain additional individual academic support from module tutors. The College operates an open-door policy that enables students to obtain support for personal and academic issues. There is no record of these meetings to assist the tracking of students' learning and development.

There is no system to aid student personal development planning and encourage reflection on their performance. It is desirable for the College to introduce a formal system to encourage personal development planning and to record the discussions of tutors' meetings with individual students on their academic progress and pastoral care.

2.11 The programme teams and personal tutors identify students whose academic performance is below standard. A college-wide system of peer tutoring and support is provided whereby stronger students work with their colleagues who are making less progress and the students assist each other. The teachers pair lower and high-performing students, and the partners work on activities that address the skills that are causing problems. This represents good practice.

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

2.12 Academic staff development is well supported by the College. Some university partners provide college staff with a range of staff development activities. This is delivered on-site by link tutors and moderators, or as part of wider collaborative staff development activity. The College's staff development and continuous professional development policy is appropriate to the size and type of provision. Staff requests go to the Director of Studies for approval and are judged against the value that they can add to the programmes. During the annual appraisal review the development needs of academic staff are reviewed. The Quality Assurance Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the provision made for and the take-up of staff development, which is effective.

2.13 The College offers a supportive induction process for new teaching staff. As part of this, initial staff development needs are analysed. Upon joining the College, staff are issued with a staff handbook and course handbook. These provide a useful overview of the College's policies and procedures, staff responsibilities and details of the requirements for the delivery of programmes. Programme leaders are expected to continually support staff.

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

2.14 The resources are sufficient to underpin students' learning. The College has no formal policy for resourcing learning opportunities, although it allocates a set sum per year for the purchase of learning resources. It has made significant strides to improve the facilities for its students, including a library, a suite of computers and spacious lecture rooms, access for the physically disabled, and a recreation area. The College provides a virtual learning environment that is well designed to support students by providing access to lecture notes, tutorial material and assignments. The university partners provide access to their digital libraries and electronic resources. Access is also available to the nearby Universities of London's and Greenwich's libraries and to local public libraries.

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 information that the College publishes about itself and its programmes is communicated clearly and, in the main, accurately to students and stakeholders. The College discharges its responsibility for providing information through the publication of handbooks, programme specifications, brochures, a prospectus, and policies and procedures. It also provides a virtual learning environment that acts as a repository for programme materials and a website that links with the awarding bodies' and organisation's websites. Student programme handbooks provide a factual overview of each programme of study and the policies and procedures that relate to students' day-to-day studies. These include complaints procedures, a student code of conduct, and policies on punctuality and authorised absences. This information replicates that provided by the awarding bodies and organisation and is available in the College's and awarding partners' virtual learning environments. Awarding bodies and organisation's study and module guides include assessment details and the entry and study requirements for awarding bodies and organisation's external examinations. The quality assurance manual provides source information on the College's policies and procedures that apply to its staff, students and recruitment agents.

3.2 Prospective students can make an informed choice of their programme of study by using the College website. This provides a range of clearly expressed information, including online application forms, information on visa applications, and details of the courses and their examination requirements.

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

3.3 There is scope for improving the College's procedures that underpin its publications. The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of public information. All information must be approved by one of the three senior members of the College staff. There is no formal signing-off system to guarantee that only approved material is made public, including the contents of its website. The Director of Operations assumes overall responsibility for the website content, staff and student handbooks and the prospectus. It is advisable that the College formalises the checking and signing off of all public information.

The relevant awarding body or organisation checks the information that the College publishes about its programmes. The College must seek approval from a designated contact in each awarding partner to modify any marketing or programme material. Similarly, any changes to the College's published material, such as handbooks, must be approved by the relevant awarding body or organisation. The Manager for International Development carries out half-yearly website checks and is responsible for the accuracy of the website content. The Director of Studies and academic staff manage the virtual learning environment. There are also automated mechanisms for the removal of events that have expired and students can alert the College of irregularities in published information.

<p>The team concludes that <b>reliance can be placed</b> on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.</p>
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## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

City of London College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight May 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the system of peer tutoring pairs lower and high-performing students to support underperforming students' learning (paragraph 2.11).</li> </ul>	Describe system of support (briefing paper) and circulate to all staff  Staff development meeting to discuss and disseminate	Sept 2012	Director of Quality Assurance and relevant course coordinator	All staff in receipt of information and utilising as appropriate	Director of Studies	Revise student module questionnaire to include specific question on evaluation of system
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>revise and clarify the committee structure to ensure that it reflects current college practice accurately (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	Audit of committee structures to refine focus and ensure applicability and suitability of membership and terms of reference	Sept 2012	Director of Studies	All committees have appropriate membership/focus to ensure effective and efficient management of area of responsibility	Board of Governors	Focused responsibility and more effective management

<sup>3</sup> 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 organisation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the College's internal verification policy and the procedures for providing feedback to students on their assignments to ensure that they fully align with the <i>Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students</i> (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.10)</li> </ul>	<p>Commission review of marking of all lecturers to identify development needs and examples of good practice</p> <p>Provide staff development session for all staff on expectations and role of feedback</p>	Oct 2012	Director of Studies	<p>Greater consistency - with feedback focused and offering positive comments on improvement - related to intended learning outcomes</p> <p>Clear understanding by all lecturers of acceptable level/detail of feedback</p>	Principal	Review of student module questionnaires, especially for lecturers identified as needing training/staff development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designate one committee or group to have oversight of the academic standards of the College's provision (paragraph 1.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Related to earlier point on committee structures</p> <p>Specify membership and terms of reference for 'new' committee with oversight of academic standards</p>	Sept 2012	Director of Studies	<p>Focused responsibility for strategic and operational aspects of academic standards</p> <p>Revised lines of reporting</p>	Board of Governors	<p>Effective oversight of academic standards</p> <p>Focused responsibility with more effective management and reporting lines</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that there are full and accurate records of all its formal meetings (paragraph 2.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Appointment of Minutes Clerk</p> <p>Staff training on minute taking, with identification of minimum/acceptable standards</p>	Sept 2012	Director of Quality Assurance	<p>Clerk in post – lead role</p> <p>Clear appreciation of role of minutes in recording and planning process Tracking issues</p>	Director of Studies	Audit of minutes to ensure consistency and adequacy

	Develop standard format for agenda and minutes			and the action agenda		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the contents of annual monitoring reports are more comprehensive, evaluative and respond to the external examiners' reports (paragraph 2.4)</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure all external examiner reports are recorded and a letter and/or acknowledgment sent</p> <p>Issues to be recorded as an action agenda, and all reflected in annual reports</p>	Aug 2012	Director of Quality Assurance	<p>All issues resolved and/or carried forward for action</p> <p>External examiner role redefined, enhanced and more effective</p> <p>Tracking mechanisms developed</p>	Director of Studies	<p>Fewer issues unresolved</p> <p>External inputs providing more effective guide to quality enhancement</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise the checking and signing off of all public information (paragraph 3.3).</li> </ul>	<p>Develop system of graduated editorial control</p> <p>All public information to be formally 'signed off' and decision recorded</p>	Sept 2012	Principal	Editorial responsibility recognised and evidenced in formal recording procedures	Director of Studies	<p>Ability to 'track' approval of changes to public information</p> <p>Clarification of responsibility</p>
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review its procedures for considering statistical data for its programmes</li> </ul>	Establish small working group to review statistical data within/across both modules and	Report Sept 2012	Principal	Agreed framework for data evaluation and subsequent actions	Director of Studies	Enhanced level of analysis in annual course reports and effective evaluation of data

(paragraph 2.3)	programmes  Establish levels of acceptability			Ability to compare levels of achievement across modules and programmes		pre-Board and post-Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further enhance the teaching and learning experience for small cohorts of students (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	Establish working party to: (1) explore the nature of the learning experience for small groups; (2) identify alternative learning opportunities for groups of below 5; (3) review higher education developments in this context; (4) evaluate alternative formative and summative assessment strategies	Sept 2012	Principal	Provision of staff development session to share outcomes  Appreciation of alternative teaching and assessment strategies	Director of Studies	Higher levels of student satisfaction as communicated in module questionnaires and from student course representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce a formal system to encourage personal development planning and to record the discussions of tutors' meetings with individual students on their academic progress and pastoral care (paragraph 2.10).</li> </ul>	Establish a focus group to explore and/or review personal development planning exemplars operating in validating universities  Implement agreed system of academic and non-academic profiling	Oct 2012	Principal	Personal development planning processes and procedures developed and/or refined with respect to the College context  Fully operational for new (October 2012) intake	Director of Studies	All students develop personal development planning profiles  Evidence of value assessed in feedback questionnaires

				under stewardship of designated manager		
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## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook<sup>4</sup>](#)

**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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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://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.

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