



# **London School of Business & Finance**

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

September 2012

## Key findings about London School of Business & Finance

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in September 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 Bradford, University of Wales, University of Central Lancashire, London Metropolitan University, Edexcel, Grenoble Graduate School of Business, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

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.

### Good practice

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

- extensive support given to students by academic staff (paragraph 2.10)
- presentation and availability of information in multiple languages on the website (paragraph 3.1)
- effective electronic support and tracking systems relating to public information policy (paragraph 3.4)
- extensive support and resources provided to recruitment agents (paragraph 3.6).

### Recommendations

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

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

- review the consistency and presentation of management information in the annual monitoring process (paragraph 1.3)
- review the effectiveness of its processes and procedures in relation to the consideration of, and responses to, external examiner reports (paragraph 1.7)
- implement an effective mechanism for the oversight of the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 2.6)
- implement procedures to strengthen the oversight of all aspects of the assessment of student work (paragraph 2.8).

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

- review and develop further the support offered to students during induction (paragraph 2.9)
- develop further the student liaison function to provide greater support for students (paragraph 2.11)
- strengthen the personal development training opportunities available for student representatives (paragraph 2.13)

- strengthen oversight of the continuing professional development needs of academic staff (paragraph 2.15)
- standardise staff induction processes (paragraph 2.16)
- provide clear and accessible guidance to students on key policies and procedures (paragraph 3.2).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London School of Business & Finance (the provider; LSBF). 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 Central Lancashire, University of Bradford, London Metropolitan University, the University of Wales, Edexcel, Grenoble Graduate School of Business, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Marketing. The review was carried out by Professor David Eastwood, Mr Paul Monroe, Dr Elizabeth Smith (reviewers), and Mr Maldwyn Buckland (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: memoranda of agreements, annual monitoring review reports, external examiner reports, assessed student work and internal verification documentation, student and programme handbooks, programme module board minutes, programme team meeting minutes, terms of reference for committees and induction documentation. In addition, further evidence was evaluated through meetings with staff, students, awarding body and organisation representatives and external examiners.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

London School of Business & Finance (LSBF), founded in 2003, offers certificate, undergraduate and postgraduate level courses in a range of full and part-time, blended and online delivery modes. LSBF began providing postgraduate programmes with the Grenoble Graduate School of Business in 2005. Other postgraduate programmes followed, initially with the University of East London, and more recently with the University of Wales in 2009 and the University of Bradford in 2010.

LSBF commenced delivering undergraduate degree programmes in 2011 with Grenoble Graduate School of Business and the University of Central Lancashire. Postgraduate awards of the University of Wales are currently being phased out and replaced by programmes validated by London Metropolitan University.

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 student numbers shown in brackets:

### University of Wales

- Master of Business Administration (411)
- MSc Finance (210)
- MSc Marketing (97)

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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).

#### **Grenoble Graduate Business School**

- Master of Business Administration (17)
- Master of International Business (57)
- MSc Finance (25)
- Bachelor of International Business (57)

#### **University of Bradford**

- Master of Law (31)

#### **University of Central Lancashire**

- BA (Hons) Business Administration (24)

#### **London Metropolitan University**

- Master of Business Administration (69)
- MSc Finance (27)
- MSc Marketing (23)
- BSc Business Management (16)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance (10)
- Higher Education Diploma in Accounting and Finance (48)
- Preparatory Diploma in Business and Finance (9)
- Pre-Master's (3)

#### **Edexcel**

- Higher Diploma in Business (level 5) (33)
- Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (level 7) (35)

#### **Association of Chartered Certified Accountants**

- Certificate (levels 4, 6 and 7) (6,549 part-time short course student numbers)

#### **Chartered Institute of Management Accountants**

- Certificate (levels 4, 5, 6 and 7) (863 part-time short course student numbers)

#### **Chartered Institute of Marketing**

- Certificate (levels 5 and 6) (111 part-time short course student numbers)

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

LSBF has collaborative arrangements with the University of Wales, Grenoble Graduate School of Business, University of Bradford, University of Central Lancashire, London Metropolitan University, St Patrick's College, Teesside University, Edexcel, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Marketing. LSBF's awarding body and organisation agreements vary in the scope and degree of responsibilities, for example in terms of assessments, marking and quality control arrangements. In the case of Edexcel, LSBF sets assessments, ensures quality controls and keeps qualification records. The Grenoble Graduate School of Business has full responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic standards and quality assurance. LSBF has collaborative arrangements with Teesside University and St Patrick's College, but does not currently deliver any accredited programmes.

## Recent developments

In 2011, LSBF became an accredited centre for Edexcel and offers higher national and postgraduate diplomas in business and management. In July 2012, LSBF was awarded with the Erasmus University Charter.

LSBF has faced a number of challenges recently, most notably with its collaborative relationship with the University of Wales. A report undertaken by QAA in 2012 concluded that within the last year LSBF has put in place measures to strengthen its quality management arrangements. These include securing the standards of awards, enhancing learning opportunities for students, listening to students' voices and including students in quality assurance.

LSBF operates from premises in London and through associate companies in Birmingham and Manchester. It also has overseas campuses in Toronto and Singapore currently offering the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants' professional courses. LSBF has recently expanded its academic profile through the creation of the London College of Contemporary Arts. The College has been approved by the Grenoble Graduate School of Business to deliver its MSc Fashion and Luxury Brand Management programme in 2012-13.

## Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The LSBF implemented a Student Association in 2011. The President of the Student Association attended a QAA briefing in November 2011 and assisted the student body in the preparation of the student submission. Students contributed several individual written sections which were subsumed into the final written submission document. The implementation of the Association is seen by the students as an important achievement demonstrating the LSBF's commitment to responding to the collective student voice.

The team met professional, undergraduate and postgraduate students during the review and the preparatory meeting, and discussed their submission and a range of academic and pastoral issues. Student comments raised at the visit, and issues highlighted in the written submission, contributed effectively to the review.

## Detailed findings about London School of Business & Finance

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 LSBF manages academic standards effectively at academic school level in conjunction with its awarding bodies and organisations. LSBF recently introduced a new committee structure, with academic school boards, created for each of its four schools: the Business School, the Professional School, the School of English and the newly created London College of Creative Arts. Academic staff have a clear understanding of the new structure and its operation. While senior staff confirmed that the institutional committee structure and revised processes and procedures provide for greater consistency of practice and improved communication, the team noted a lack of consistency in communications and documented processes across LSBF. The team, however, acknowledged the extent of institutional-level change, but concluded that, as this was very recent, the evidence available at the time of the review visit was insufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of the new processes.

1.2 The role of the school boards is most clearly demonstrated by the Business School Board, which is responsible for programme committees, and a school-level Assessment Committee, which supports the operational aspects of programme delivery. Staff in the business and professional schools demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities for the management of academic standards and obligations to the awarding bodies and organisations. The school boards report to the Quality Enhancement Committee and the Academic Planning Committee, which report to the Academic Board. An executive committee of the Academic Board meets at frequent intervals to manage matters arising between Academic Board meetings. A strategy index, implemented by the Academic Board provides support for policy development, including physical and human resources, information technology and marketing. Membership of the board has been extended to include students who confirmed this to be a positive development.

1.3 LSBF utilises a range of management information in support of the annual monitoring process, including programme statistics, enrolment and progression data, student feedback, outcomes of assessment boards and external examiner reports. However, minutes from key committees indicated that there is a lack of monitoring of the consistency and standardisation in the presentation of information, particularly enrolment and progression data, resulting in duplication and discrepancies within documentation. The team considers it advisable that LSBF reviews the consistency and presentation of management information in the annual monitoring process to strengthen its management of academic standards.

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

1.4 For programmes leading to the award of a university qualification, the management of academic standards follows the validation and quality assurance frameworks of the validating university. The Quality Manual makes limited reference to the Academic Infrastructure. Staff in the Business School and central support staff, however, demonstrated their familiarity with the Academic Infrastructure, in particularly appropriate sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*) and the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education,

the requirements of the British Accreditation Council, the European Qualifications Framework and the UK Border Agency. Programme directors have responsibility for ensuring compliance with the requirements of awarding bodies and organisations.

1.5 Professional School programmes are accredited by national awarding organisations. Most students are enrolled on courses accredited by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants with the remainder on Chartered Institute of Marketing and Edexcel courses. Reports from regular monitoring visits by these organisations indicate satisfaction with the standards being achieved by the School and the students. Both the awarding organisations and the School provide students with clear guidance on standards in handbooks and course specifications.

1.6 Staff in the Professional School are expected to be members of relevant professional bodies and staff teaching on the Grenoble Graduate School of Business modules are affiliated by the Grenoble Graduate School of Business, according to the standards set by the Association of Masters in Business Administration, European Quality Improvement Systems and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. LSBF intends that future programme proposals will be scrutinised internally by the Quality Enhancement Committee prior to being submitted to the universities for validation or for centre approval, to ensure greater engagement on the part of programme teams with external reference points. Academic staff welcomed the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Committee and its role in strengthening the oversight of curriculum design and development.

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

1.7 Programmes in the Business School are subject to the external examining procedures of the validating universities. Minutes of meetings show that external examiner reports are considered at the Quality Enhancement Committee and the Academic Board. However, successive examination board minutes include some repetition of previous critical feedback, indicating that the School had responded, only partially, to the comments made. The team considers it advisable that LSBF reviews the effectiveness of its processes and procedures in relation to the consideration of, and responses to, external examiner reports.

1.8 For programmes that belong to the Grenoble Graduate School of Business, module teaching and assessment plans are agreed by Grenoble-based module supervisors and are approved by the Board of Studies in Grenoble. For Edexcel, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Marketing programmes, content and assessments are designed and internally verified by LSBF staff according to clear guidance from the awarding body and organisations. The team found that, in most cases, assignment and its design is appropriate, fair and consistent, and feedback to students relevant and clear. External verification is undertaken by awarding body and organisation verifiers during centre monitoring visits and both external verification and wider considerations of aspects of delivery covered by monitoring visits have received positive feedback from external verifiers.

<p>The review team has <b>confidence</b> in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies and organisations.</p>
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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 The designation and delegation of responsibilities for learning opportunities are clear, well understood by staff and generally effective. LSBF regularly monitors, reviews and evaluates its operations to comply with awarding partner requirements through programme boards which report through academic school boards to the Quality and Enhancement Committee and finally to the Academic Board.

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

2.2 LSBF's use of external reference points in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities reflects those for academic standards, as outlined in paragraphs 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6.

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

2.3 Lead responsibility for assuring the quality of teaching and learning is effectively shared between the Programme Director for the Professional School and the Programme Director for the Business School. As detailed in the new Quality Assurance Manual, and overseen by the Quality Enhancement Committee, LSBF is in the process of reviewing its procedures to introduce a centralised quality assurance process to complement those of the validating universities and professional bodies. Senior staff confirm this will strengthen the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning.

2.4 Within the Professional School, the quality of teaching and learning is closely monitored by the awarding partners and results consistently exceed national averages. As a result, LSBF has recently been invited to upgrade its current Association of Chartered Certified Accountants' gold accredited learning partner status to platinum. Within the Business School, current day-to-day responsibilities for monitoring and promoting developments in teaching and learning reside with the Executive Dean; responsibilities for support services with the Managing Director; and for procedural issues with the Academic Registrar. Feedback from staff confirms the general effectiveness of these processes.

2.5 Programme leaders assure the quality of teaching and learning in accordance with varying awarding body and organisation requirements, and are responsible for the production of annual reports. These include commentary on the outcomes of the monitoring of results, commentary on student satisfaction and on the measures taken during the year to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Additionally, programme committees meet regularly and provide teaching staff with a forum for the analysis and discussion of teaching and learning issues. Weekly conference calls, involving programme leaders, heads of learning resources and careers, help to ensure and enhance performance review and the sharing of good practice across school campuses. Evidence scrutinised during the review and feedback from staff confirms the general effectiveness of these processes.

2.6 LSBF has no centralised system for the peer observation of teaching and learning. Recognising this, LSBF is currently developing and extending a system of classroom observation by senior and experienced academic staff. This will form an integral part of the staff appraisal processes. However, due to limited evidence of the operation and management of this process, it is unclear how LSBF uses the process effectively for

assuring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. The team considers it advisable that LSBF implements an effective mechanism for the oversight of teaching and learning.

2.7 Student feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is collected at both module and programme levels and forms a part of both the annual programme review and annual staff appraisal processes. There is evidence that this is effective in practice.

2.8 Following the recent QAA report on its relationship with the University of Wales, LSBF is in the process of improving the learning delivery and assessment processes on its academic programmes. An Assessment Committee is being established, charged with exercising supervision over all aspects of assessment on degree programmes, including the processes of internal and external verification of assignments and feedback. Although the QAA report acknowledges significant recent improvement in these areas, samples of assessed work, seen by the team, revealed continuing inconsistencies, largely on the Master's of Business Administration programmes. These include inconsistencies in the provision of grading criteria, and details of intended learning outcomes, the recording of evidence of internal moderation or verification, and the extent and effectiveness of second marking. While acknowledging the recent improvements in assessment processes, the team considers it advisable that LSBF strengthens the oversight of all aspects of the assessment of student work.

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

2.9 LSBF operates an induction programme in which new students are provided with a range of information, including school procedures, programme handbooks and details of support services. However, students reported a variability in this provision, both with respect to the timing of induction and in the provision of information, including programme handbooks. LSBF conducts student questionnaires to review the effectiveness of the induction programme, but the interviewed students suggested that the issuing of these questionnaires varies significantly. The team considers it desirable that LSBF reviews, and develops further, the support offered to students during induction.

2.10 LSBF operates an open-door policy for students to engage with academic staff, including regular opportunities to meet module and programme leaders. Students confirmed the effectiveness of this system, and welcomed the approachability of academic staff and their helpfulness, in dealing with a broad range of pastoral and academic issues on request. The team confirmed that the extensive support and guidance given to students by academic staff, through the open-door policy, enriches the student learning experience and constitutes good practice.

2.11 Student support is available in a number of additional welfare areas, for example in a one-to-one careers service and an English language support service. LSBF's career and welfare support services are helpful and effective. LSBF also has student liaison officers on each campus to engage with students in respect of their academic and wider pastoral issues and act as intermediaries with school managers and programme leaders. However, students reported that this system is not always performing effectively and that engagement with the LSBF's administrative support function sometimes proves difficult, an issue of which LSBF is aware and is in the process of addressing. The team considers it desirable that LSBF develops further the student liaison function to provide greater support for students.

2.12 LSBF collects student feedback in a variety of ways, including student questionnaires at module and programme levels. These are effectively used to inform the LSBF's various quality assurance mechanisms. Students confirmed that LSBF listens to their views and provided evidence of a range of issues raised which led to corrective

improvements. LSBF is currently proposing to standardise the format and review the content of student feedback questionnaires prior to presentation to the Quality Enhancement Committee.

2.13 Student representatives are elected at class level and meet regularly with programme leaders, external verifiers and awarding partner representatives. Students confirmed that they found this process useful and effective. LSBF supports a Student Association which, in addition to serving an excellent social function, also provides a forum for students to raise and discuss concerns. The association has an elected student president who represents student views and concerns at the Quality Enhancement Committee and Academic Board. However, limited training for student representatives lessens the effectiveness of the process. The team considers it desirable that LSBF strengthens the personal development training opportunities made available to student representatives, providing increased support for more effective representation of the student voice.

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

2.14 LSBF operates a thorough annual staff performance appraisal. This provides goals for development which are determined, agreed and signed off by both appraisees and line managers. The comprehensive nature of the appraisal process, which covers a variety of personal development benchmarks such as technical education and learning, professional practice, research and scholarly activity, leadership and innovation, enhances the working environment of the academic staff.

2.15 LSBF provides some resources for individual training and development. Recently introduced workshops are available to assist staff with responsibilities for the supervision and marking of master's dissertations. In the absence of a formal staff development policy, however, it is unclear how outcomes from appraisal feed into the staff development process. Staff development procedures throughout LSBF remain inconsistent and lacking in coherent monitoring. The team considers it desirable that LSBF strengthens its oversight of the continuing professional development needs of academic staff to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

2.16 LSBF's induction programme for all new staff is designed to provide an overall awareness and understanding of institutional policies and procedures, but is inconsistently applied across the schools. The Business School, for example, currently provides additional induction activities which detail policies, assessment strategies and administrative procedures. It also operates a valuable mentor/professional adviser scheme for new staff. Other schools do not offer such a scheme. The team considers that it is desirable for LSBF to standardise staff induction processes to provide parity and consistency across the provision.

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

2.17 In addition to the online library and other learning resource services available through awarding partners, LSBF has extensive library provision on its main teaching campus. This includes a wide range of printed material and fully accessible online resources, including online journals and e-books. Students confirmed, however, that current library provision varies between campuses as a result of limitations in book stocks, space and internet connectivity. As a result, LSBF has recently established the post of Head of Learning Resources with specific responsibility for managing and coordinating online learning resources.

2.18 A virtual learning environment is employed for the dissemination of information between students, academic and administrative areas and, in some cases, with awarding partners. Some students expressed concern at the delays experienced in the uploading of information, but in general, most confirmed the usefulness of the system. The team noted, however, that LSBF's use of the virtual learning environment is limited. Students acknowledged that the physical resources, for example teaching rooms and computer facilities, are of high quality and contribute to the enhancement of their learning experience. Staff confirmed the resources meet the standards of the awarding bodies and organisations. Human resources within LSBF are adequate, with staff qualified in their subject areas. Students are appreciative of the academic staff, both in terms of their subject knowledge and their overall approachability.

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 website is informative and accessible, with separate gateways for programmes, students, online study, alumni and, through the 'programme' gateway, access to information on current awarding bodies and organisations. There is substantial information on open days, future intakes, careers and employability, campuses, news and media. An effective online application form is available. The website offers links to a range of social networking sites and this facilitates useful communication with students in a variety of ways. LSBF takes no responsibility for the views expressed on the social networking sites. Effective electronic and printed prospectuses, and other recruitment, promotional and advertising materials, are available to prospective students, recruitment agents, enrolling students, enrolled students, staff and other stakeholders. The information on the website is clearly presented in seven languages. International students welcomed this and confirmed it was a highly effective tool when accessing the wide range of information provided prior to application and enrolment. The team considers the presentation and availability of information in multiple languages on the website to be good practice, providing clear and accessible information to students.

3.2 Student and programme handbooks are clear and appropriate, and contain useful information on living in London and the UK, school rules, guidelines, syllabuses, marking procedures and reading lists, but are less helpful in terms of school policies and procedures. The handbooks are reviewed and updated each year and include extra materials suggested by the students. The team, however, found that links to LSBF's policies and procedures, especially those relating to complaints and appeals, were absent from the handbooks. The team considers it desirable that LSBF provides clear and accessible guidance to students on key policies and procedures.

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

3.3 There are clear and effective lines of responsibility for assuring accuracy and completeness of information. Overall responsibility for creating, updating and monitoring of public information lies with the Head of Brand and Marketing. The Group Managing Director,

in conjunction with the Head of Communications, has overall responsibility for ensuring public information is factually accurate and complete, and reflects the nature and quality of the educational experience that students can expect during their study at the school. LSBF complies with its delegated responsibilities as set out in the agreements made with the awarding bodies and organisations, details of which are represented to varying degrees in the memoranda of agreement.

3.4 The Quality Assurance and Brand and Marketing departments have recently completed an extensive and thorough review of previous procedures and policies to ensure they align with the Academic Infrastructure and the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Marketing and academic staff were clear in their understanding of this process, confirming that relevant precepts of the *Code of practice* had been consulted in the review of policy documentation. A public information policy and processes document has been approved by the Academic Board. This comprehensively explains the purpose, scope and principles used to assure the accuracy, completeness and currency of the public information produced by LSBF in a coherent manner. The public information policy now forms part of the routine induction and training programme for all new members of staff. Staff have received training in the use of the policy and expressed their appreciation of this new development. The electronic support and tracking system effectively monitors the development of public information, reminding staff of their responsibilities six weeks before action is required. The team considers this support system to be an area of good practice.

3.5 The Communications and Engagement Department is responsible for internal and external communication, links with the media and the development of news items, in line with LSBF's communications and publicity policy. The Marketing Department is responsible for web content, advertising and broadcasting, student handbooks and induction packs. Student fees, terms and conditions are set by the Board of Directors and the Legal Department.

3.6 Recruitment agents are required to submit proposals for advertisements and promotional material to LSBF's Business Development Manager for approval two weeks before they are to be used. Clear and well presented templates are provided for this purpose. LSBF provides extensive advertising and promotional materials and high levels of support to recruitment agents, including regular visits to the countries where they are based. The Business Development Manager and Marketing Department representatives approve material for overseas recruitment activities, with or without conditions, before submission to the Head of Brand and Marketing for final approval. The extensive support and resources provided to recruitment agents to promote overseas development activities is an area of good practice.

3.7 There is an effective process for the regular review of public information, whereby content, accuracy and currency are reviewed biannually against LSBF's brand guidelines. Changes to the external environment, including any changes to relevant legislation, are taken into account at this stage, as is student feedback, changes made by the awarding partners and the views of third-party stakeholders. For example, the students had requested that testimonials from current and past students be placed on the website and this has been done. All public information is checked by the relevant programme managers and administrators prior to release and signed off by the Head of Communications and the Group Managing Director.

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<sup>3</sup>

London School of Business & Finance action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 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>extensive support given to students by academic staff (paragraph 2.10)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to ensure the effectiveness of the open-door policy in respect of the postgraduate and professional programmes and develop and monitor the effectiveness of the personal tutor arrangements on all undergraduate programmes</p> <p>Share experiences through internal 'reflective workshops' and agree any further actions</p>	<p>July 2013</p> <p>At the end of each semester and for the professional courses in January and June</p> <p>These dates represent interim reporting dates for the progress of study, but represent good dates to capture</p>	<p>Heads of studies, programme leaders supported by module leaders</p>	<p>Improved positive feedback from students through their participation in and attendance at programme committees and through module feedback forms with response rates improved by at least 20 per cent in the first instance</p> <p>Satisfaction rate should similarly improve by 10 per cent in the first instance, and</p>	<p>The school boards through programme committee minutes</p> <p>In cases where the issues are beyond the responsibilities of school boards to executive deans</p>	<p>The annual programme monitoring by the Quality Committee and dedicated workshop evaluations</p>

<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 organisations.

		experiences and to make any adjustments		comply with any satisfactory targets set by the professional bodies for the professional programme		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presentation and availability of information in multiple languages on the website (paragraph 3.1)</li> </ul>	<p>To review the usefulness of the different language sites with the natural language users</p> <p>To seek to identify the next stage of increasing multiple language communication based upon recruitment targets and geographical interest</p>	Interim internal audit in April and full internal audit in October 2013	Website manager	To secure clear actions for improvement on the current website and to target an increase of two further language additions by 2015	The Group Managing Director	Plan approval and monitored by the Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effective electronic support and tracking systems relating to public information policy (paragraph 3.4)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue with training on the public information policy and processes and periodic review</p> <p>Extend tracking so that it encompasses student handbooks and other non-marketing materials</p>	June 2013	Head of Marketing	Zero inaccuracy in public information and full sign-off of processes recorded at the correct responsibility points under the public information policy	The Group Managing Director	Audit requested to the Academic Board on an annual basis

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extensive support and resources provided to recruitment agents (paragraph 3.6).</li> </ul>	<p>Keep the materials under review to ensure they are accurate</p> <p>Continue 'mystery shopping' exercise to ensure completeness and accuracy of advice, information and service</p>	Full internal audit in June 2013	Head of International Recruitment	Satisfactory outcome to the internal audit	The Group Managing Director	Audit reported to both the Academic Board and Senior Management
<b>Advisable</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>advisable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the consistency and presentation of management information in the annual monitoring process (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	<p>All staff to engage with MIS data in annual monitoring</p> <p>All staff to confirm that actions under the Annual Quality Enhancement Plans have been undertaken - if not, how they will be moved forward</p> <p>Undertake an initial review of the way management information is</p>	February 2013	Registrar of the Business School and Director of Quality Assurance for professional courses  School boards	Effective presentation of management information in the annual monitoring process, which allows meaningful judgements and comparisons to be made and evidence in reports to Quality Committee and Academic Board	Quality Committee and Academic Board	Quality Committee and Academic Board



	presented to ensure consistency, wherever possible, subject to the constraints imposed by validating bodies to further enhance the standard reporting template and information requests to align with the school strategic indicators and to consider on Higher Education Statistics Agency application					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the effectiveness of its processes and procedures in relation to the consideration of, and responses to, external examiner reports (paragraph 1.7)</li> </ul>	Complete a review of the existing process, with the intention to further enhance the process, with clearer reporting, response and review lines, and more extensive sharing of actions and improvements with all stakeholders (including students)	April 2013	Registrar of the Business School and Quality Office	<p>The construction of a reporting template to provide clear lines of responsibility, evidence, and timeframes for the receipt, consideration and sharing of actions based on external examiner reports</p> <p>An audit of the template records to confirm the effective processing of the</p>	School boards	Quality Committee through annual monitoring

				reports		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement an effective mechanism for the oversight of the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the present pilot scheme of peer review, undertake a critical evaluation and produce a revised scheme for the next academic year</p>	July 2013	Quality Committee through a subcommittee which includes input from Human Resources	<p>Evidence that all teaching staff have engaged in the pilot scheme and have been positive in that engagement</p> <p>Evidence of the construction of staff development and support activities based upon the outcomes of peer review</p>	Quality Committee and School boards	Academic Board and external bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement procedures to strengthen the oversight of all aspects of the assessment of student work (paragraph 2.8).</li> </ul>	<p>Review of present procedures to identify weaknesses, building on the recent exercise in respect of student dissertation marking</p> <p>Training for all HND tutors specific to assignment writing and marking</p>	February 2013	Heads of studies, programme leaders, Head of Research, Registrar	<p>Reports from external examiners, which raise no concerns in this area</p> <p>Positive feedback from students (over 70 per cent satisfied), indicating that assessment has aided learning</p> <p>The module evaluation form will be amended</p>	Programme committees, school boards	Quality Committee through annual monitoring

<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 and develop further the support offered to students during induction (paragraph 2.9)</li> </ul>	Working closely with our partner institutions and, where appropriate, undertake a careful review across the whole institution to identify best practice and revise the current induction programmes to reflect the outcomes of the review	July 2013 (for implementation in the academic year 2013-14)	Heads of school, supported by programme leaders and administrators	At least 80 per cent very good or excellent from induction questionnaires to be reviewed by school boards	School boards	Quality Committee reporting to the Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop further the student liaison function to provide greater support for students (paragraph 2.11)</li> </ul>	<p>Review current work in progress in this area</p> <p>Identify good practice and make changes where required, and private staff development to assist in enhancing the role and performance of the role</p>	April 2013	Head of Student Services and other senior staff	Positive feedback from students through their student representatives, through the Student Association and student evaluation forms (at least 70 per cent satisfaction rate for this support on the	School boards	Quality Committee reporting to the Academic Board

				programme evaluation forms)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen the personal development training opportunities available for student representatives (paragraph 2.13)</li> </ul>	Devise an appropriate training package with the help of external bodies and partners	February 2013	Student Enhancement staff and the Student Association	<p>All boards and committees having student representatives in place (with a minimum attendance review of student representatives in attendance at 75% of recorded meetings)</p> <p>Increased contribution of students at committees and boards of which they are members</p>	Student Association, executive and school boards	Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen oversight of the continuing professional development needs of academic staff (paragraph 2.15)</li> </ul>	Ensure the articulation of a clear continuing professional development policy for each school reflecting the particular needs of the schools working closely with Human Resources	July 2013	<p>Executive deans/heads of studies supported by programme leaders</p> <p>Overall coordination by a subgroup of the Quality Committee</p>	<p>Acceptance by external bodies</p> <p>In the case of professional courses, continued accreditation by ACCA</p> <p>Publication of an annual continuing professional</p>	Academic Board	Quality Committee

				development report Annual monitoring of staff satisfaction levels with a minimum satisfaction target of 75 per cent		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>standardise staff induction processes (paragraph 2.16)</li> </ul>	Review of existing processes and their revision where weaknesses are identified	March 2013	Human Resources	Improved understanding by all new staff of their roles	Senior Management	Senior Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide clear and accessible guidance to students on key policies and procedures (paragraph 3.2).</li> </ul>	Detailed review of the present position to identify weaknesses	March 2013	Quality Office	Greater understanding by current and prospective students resulting in fewer complaints  To be tested by internal audit	School boards	Quality Committee through annual reports  An internal audit process

## 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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