Oxford College of London

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

October 2012

Key findings about Oxford College of London

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in October 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 Edexcel.

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

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

Good practice

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

- the rapid provision of supportive, developmental feedback for assessed work in a variety of formats (paragraph 2.5)
- the prompt and effective responses to issues raised by students (paragraphs 2.6 and 2.13)
- the helpfulness and accessibility of all staff and their readiness to provide support and guidance (paragraph 2.10).

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 effectiveness and efficiency of its committees (paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2)
- engage more thoroughly with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraphs 1.4 and 2.2)
- systematically gather and analyse student opinion (paragraphs 2.2 and 2.6)
- provide induction and initial guidance to distance learners that fully prepares them for their learning (paragraph 2.9)
- review all information given to distance learning students to ensure that it is comprehensive and relevant to their learning needs (paragraph 3.2)
- establish clear systems for reviewing and updating public information to ensure accuracy and reliability (paragraph 3.3).

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

- implement current plans to improve the monitoring and control of plagiarism (paragraph 1.6)
- check that students are fully informed of the grading criteria for all assessments (paragraph 2.10)
- identify staff training needs to provide a basis for staff development and for the sharing of good practice in classroom delivery and assessment (paragraphs 2.11 and 2.12)

- develop interactive learning activities within the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.14)
- implement current plans to enhance virtual learning environment-based learning materials for distance learning programmes (paragraph 2.14).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Oxford College of London (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 Edexcel. The review was carried out by Ms Michelle Callanan, Dr Ross Ferguson, Mrs Sue Miller (reviewers), and Mr Robert Jones (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *[Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#)*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding organisation, meetings with staff and students, and a report from the Accreditation Service for International Colleges.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- the regulations of Edexcel.

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

Oxford College of London (the College) is a private independent college established in December 2005 and located in East Ham, where it operates on a single campus. It has been running Edexcel BTEC courses since 2007. Initially, its awards were campus-based only, but since 2011 it has also offered Edexcel courses through distance learning. Currently, it has 209 students, 207 of whom are on higher education courses. There are165 full-time students on campus-based courses and 42 part-time students on distance learning courses. International students comprise 79 per cent of the total. There are seven academic staff, three full-time and four part-time.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation (with student numbers in brackets):

Edexcel
- Higher National Certificate in Business (level 4) (49)
  Higher National Diploma in Business (level 5) (31)
- Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (level 7) (58)
- Higher National Certificate in Travel and Tourism Management (level 4) (6)
- Higher National Diploma in Travel and Tourism Management (level 5) (13)
- Higher National Diploma in Health and Social Care (Management) (level 5) (6)
- Diploma in Assessment Management (level 7) (77)
- Higher National Certificate in Hospitality Management (level 4) (1)

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

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College teaches and assesses its students. It monitors the quality of its teaching and the standards of its assessment through an internal verification process. Edexcel oversees the College's standards through moderation of its assessments and through external examiners' visits, which also check whether the College manages and enhances the quality of the learning opportunities of its students.

Recent developments

The College launched a distance learning programme in 2011 and aims to provide cost-effective learning to those who are unable to come to the UK for study or are unable to leave their home environment because of reasons such as infirmity or domestic responsibilities. This initiative was launched because of the fall in the number of campus-based students, which caused financial problems, leading to a significant reduction in the number of staff.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Representative students addressed questions designed to elicit feedback on academic standards, learning opportunities and public information, on the basis of which they produced a helpful submission. Students met the review coordinator during the preparatory meeting and the team during the review visit. Both meetings were highly productive.

Detailed findings about Oxford College of London

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The academic committee structure of the College provides a limited basis for the effective management of academic standards. The College needs to review the effectiveness and efficiency of its committees. The College Quality Assurance Manual, which was operational until relatively recently, sets out a full structure and procedures for quality assurance. The College acknowledges that, because of staffing shortages, these arrangements are no longer in place. The manual provided a sound foundation for practices in the College, upon which it could continue to build. Currently, the Academic Committee meets annually, and the team was informed that it holds primary responsibility for the management of academic standards. However, it has met once only and its focus on academic matters has so far been very limited. In practice, its principal functions in relation to academic standards are dealt with by the Academic Meeting. There are no terms of reference for either committee. Attendance at the Academic Meeting varies considerably between meetings.

1.2 The Academic Meetings discuss the external examiners' reports, but evidence of subsequent action planning is difficult to trace. The use of other evidence for the review of standards and quality at course level is underdeveloped and course review processes are not specified. The absence of the systematic collection and analysis of students' views means that only anecdotal feedback from students is considered. Student performance, retention and progression data, though available, is not analysed to identify trends or to make cross-course comparisons. However, the Academic Meetings have increasingly begun to deal with matters concerning academic standards on an ad hoc basis and this could provide a foundation for a more systematic approach.

1.3 In practice, the close working relationships between staff, and their multiple roles and responsibilities, currently ensures that action is taken to address issues that arise. For example, despite the lack of evidence of action planning concerning external examiners' reports referred to in paragraph 1.2, the necessary actions have been taken and the external examiners comment favourably on the management of the courses. The Operations Manager holds ultimate responsibility for the management of standards, and receives relevant information from the Academic Manager. However, while these officers and other key staff respond speedily and take action when needed, such actions tend to be done on an informal basis and are mostly unrecorded.

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

1.4 The College relies heavily on its relationship with Edexcel to ensure that its provision aligns with the Academic Infrastructure as a key external reference point. Approval and regular evaluations by Edexcel demonstrate the College's effective engagement with the specific requirements of Edexcel regarding the management of assessment. A more direct and explicit engagement with the Academic Infrastructure would strengthen the College's oversight of academic standards.

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

1.5   The College's responsibilities for moderation, verification and examining are effectively carried out. The external examiners' reports confirm the use of varied and effective assessment strategies, and particularly complement the use of integrated assessments covering up to three units. An effective internal verification system ensures that assessment criteria are addressed and student work is assessed accurately.

1.6   The monitoring and control of plagiarism would benefit from being strengthened. Current arrangements for the detection of plagiarism rely entirely upon the capacities of academic staff to identify signs of work that is not originated by the student being assessed, including recognition of work copied from other past or current students completing similar assignments. However, the College is at an advanced stage of negotiations to purchase plagiarism detection software.

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

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   Management of the quality of learning opportunities mirrors that described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3 for the management of academic standards.

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

2.2   Evidence of the use of external reference points is limited. The College uses the Edexcel Quality Manual to inform its course management, and has used the Academic Infrastructure, in particular *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice,* in programme design and delivery and in formulating its admissions policy. However, planning for the provision for distance learning shows limited reference to the *Code of practice*, *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning).* For example, the information supplied to students on joining a distance learning programme does not provide a clear and realistic explanation of the expectations of this mode of study, as detailed in *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* of the UK Quality Code of Higher Education. The lack of a formal review process on such matters as learning opportunities, student feedback, and data on student performance, retention and progression means that College processes are not fully aligned with those described in the *Code of practice*, *Section 7*: *Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*, especially precepts 7 and 10.

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

2.3   The College has a detailed teaching and learning strategy, which provides a positive framework for classroom delivery. Students confirmed the variety of activity, clarity and quality of the lectures and their active involvement in sessions. Staff provide lesson

plans, lecture notes and handouts that are published online. External examiners report that students comment favourably on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, and particularly on the time tutors spend on explanation of the assessment requirements.

2.4   The College employs a peer observation system which includes the use of a detailed checklist for observers, and enables feedback and comment to encourage the development of teaching practice. Teaching staff are encouraged to develop the students' skills in presentation, team working and the ability to become independent learners. The range of delivery methods used and the effective involvement of students in the sessions are reflected in the observation reports and the students' comments.

2.5   Students enthusiastically confirmed that, although the College sets a 21-day target for the return of marked work, the actual time is rarely more than three days. They also commended the depth of the supportive, developmental feedback they receive from tutors. This includes not only annotation of the scripts, but a detailed written summary related to the assessment criteria and extensive oral feedback on an individual basis. The recent introduction of an explanatory document, 'Rules for formatting your coursework', has also provided support to improve submissions.

2.6   There is currently no regular formal system for gathering the views of campus-based students. An informal system of canvassing opinion from distance learners concentrates on their expectations of career improvement after completion of their course, but not their actual learning experience. Students confirmed that they are able to make comments and requests either directly to staff or using the suggestions and complaints box in reception. However, there is no regular student and staff meeting nor any student representation on any College committee. The meetings and questionnaires used to generate the student submission were instigated specifically for that purpose. The student submission highlighted a number of issues, some of which are already being addressed, for example the provision of e-library facilities. Students emphasised that in practice staff are exceptionally prompt and effective in responding to the issues they raise. The team endorses this view (see also paragraph 2.13).

2.7   Staff are well qualified. Most of them hold MBA or similar qualifications, and a range of first degrees in related subjects. Vocational experience is varied across the teaching staff, with an emphasis on commercial and business environments, but limited teaching or lecturing experience. Newly appointed staff undertake an induction and a period of work shadowing with an experienced tutor, and are observed by the Academic Manager.

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

2.8   The College's admissions policy and procedures ensure that care is taken in the recruitment of students. The checking of prior achievement and competence in English is rigorous and designed to meet Edexcel and UK Border Agency requirements. Interviews are conducted by means of internet links and students confirm that these provide useful advice on the selection of courses, as well as confirming their eligibility and exploring their quality as a potential student. A well designed and effective induction is provided to students on arrival and supported by a detailed induction booklet, as well as student and course handbooks. These are published online through the College virtual learning environment for easy reference.

2.9   Induction for distance learners is less well developed. Support is available to them on request, but the College needs to ensure that the induction and initial guidance and support given to distance learners enables them to access their learning, develop as independent learners and complete their assessments. This guidance and support should be given in an environment that provides equivalent learning opportunities to those enjoyed by

campus-based students. Distance learning students should be given clear guidance on the resources supplied as part of their distance learning package, as distinct from those which they must provide for themselves. Subsequently, however, email and telephone support is available to distance learning students and the Distance Learning Manager telephones students regularly to check progress. The online virtual learning environment used by distance learners allows for communication between learners. These communications are monitored and requests for help are answered in addition to the provision of peer support.

2.10   Campus-based students commended the accessibility of their tutors and the support they receive. There is an effective open-door policy, and the one-to-one tutorials support and encourage their progress. Welfare issues raised by students are either managed by the tutors or referred to administrative staff, whose support was also praised by students. Student progress and unit achievement is monitored using a computer-based system accessible to tutors. An update to the system is under development, and this will allow for increased collation and analysis. The external examiners had noted a prevalence of pass grades. It is not evident that all students are clear about how to obtain higher grades, although they confirmed that staff encourage them to attain these.

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

2.11   The College states that it is committed to support staff development. One member of staff is completing a Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, and two others are undertaking the BTEC Level 7 Diploma in Assessment Management. Staff attend Edexcel training events and share the information gained in the Academic Meetings. However, there is no evidence that in-house staff development activities are planned to support improvement of teaching and learning. Observation reports include suggestions for discussion and improvement, but there is no evidence that these are followed up or collated to identify common themes.

2.12   There is no systematic college-wide mechanism for the formal identification and sharing of good practice in classroom delivery or for support and development of more innovative teaching methods. The Academic Meetings are used to confirm and direct tutor activity. Examples of this are the provision of lesson plans and lecture material, and the development of materials for the virtual learning environment and in preparation for distance learning.

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

2.13   The College's resources meet the needs of its students. Campus-based students confirmed that the learning resources are good and that the College is very responsive to their resource needs. For example, all student requests for specific textbooks are purchased by the College in a timely fashion. The College is in the process of developing an e-library, which will benefit all students, especially those on distance learning programmes.

2.14   The College provides a valuable virtual learning environment that is accessible by all students and is differentiated according to mode of study. Campus-based students confirmed its value as a repository of unit information, but requested more interactive activities to enhance their learning experience. The College confirmed its commitment to developing these activities. For students on distance learning programmes, the virtual learning environment is the primary tool for accessing College resources. They are provided with Edexcel course handbooks, online annotated lecture notes, reading lists, case studies,

blogs and external video links. The College recognises the need to enhance learning materials on distance learning programmes and is in the process of adding voice recordings to lecture presentations and developing video lectures.

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

3 Public information

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

3.1 The College is generally effective in communicating its provision to students and other stakeholders, using both formal and informal mechanisms. Its website is the primary medium for published information and provides comprehensive information. Students regularly access the website and find it a valuable source of key information. For example, students confirmed the Induction Booklet to be especially useful on living and studying in the UK. Course handbooks, on the other hand, simply reproduce standard Edexcel information and are not contextualised to the College's provision.

3.2 Campus-based students confirmed the value of the website both before and after enrolment and that information gives an accurate account of the provision. However, specific information relating to distance learning programmes and the College's expectations of distance learning students need to be more comprehensive and relevant to their learning needs. For example, the College provides only brief information on the benefits of following a distance learning course, on how the programme will operate, on the assessments and on support and guidance. No specific induction information is provided. The College confirmed that it provides additional information to students through emails and in response to their queries. Given the mode of study, distance learning students would benefit from more comprehensive information to enhance their learning.

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

3.3 The College needs to establish clear systems for reviewing and updating public information. The Operations Manager has overall responsibility for all such information and approves updates of information on an ad hoc basis. However, there is no clear oversight of how the changes translate to other documents and no apparent system of version control. Although most public information is current and accurate, there are some cases of out-of-date information published. For example, over a long period, an out-of-date prospectus was on the website, and the appeals policy needs to be updated to reflect the College's changing structures.

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

Action plan[3]

Oxford College of London action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight October 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the rapid provision of supportive, developmental feedback for assessed work in a variety of formats (paragraph 2.5)	An electronic software system would be developed to provide rapid and automatic feedback for assessments within three weeks of submission (*Chapter B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code))	February 2013	College Administrator	Comprehensive, constructive and timely feedback provided to the learners mentioning both their strengths and their areas for development	Academic Manager	Software feedback report Student-staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes and report Next Edexcel external report
	Implementing any essential action or recommendation by Edexcel external	Within three weeks after the Edexcel report	Academic Manager	Implementation of the recommendation/ essential actions	Operations Manager	

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

	verifier concerning feedback to the students			proposed by Edexcel		
• the prompt and effective responses to issues raised by students (paragraphs 2.6 and 2.13)	Dealing with any issues raised by the students in the regular quarterly survey circulated via email to both campus-based and distance learning students	Quarterly in line with the four intakes of the year starting from April 2013	College Administrator	Issues raised by any students dealt with within appropriate time and feasible resources	Operations Manager/ Operations Director	Quarterly student surveys, its analysis and report
	Dealing with any issues raised in the Student-staff Liaison Committee meetings	At least twice a year, or more if required	College Administrator	Minutes of the Student-staff Liaison Committee meetings recorded with action plans tracked The information from these meetings would be fed into the Academic Committee meetings and Academic meetings	Operations Manager/ Operations Director	Student-staff Liaison Committee report Student-staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes
• the helpfulness and accessibility of all staff and their readiness to provide support and guidance (paragraph 2.10).	Student-staff Liaison Committee meetings would be held in order to find out the feedback of the students and their issues in order to act accordingly (*Chapter*	At least twice a year, or more if required	College Administrator	Acting on the concerns of the students promptly To enhance the guidance and support provided to the students	Operations Manager/ Operations Director	Student-staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes Student-staff Liaison Committee report

	B5: Student engagement of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)			Provision of prompt feedback to the students concerning their issues		
	Quarterly student survey circulated via email to the campus-based and distance learning students	From April 2013	College Administrator	As above	Operations Manager/ Operations Director	Survey analysis and report
	Academic feedback provided to the students via: email/face-to-face prior to the final submission (*Chapter B6*: *Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)	At the earliest	Tutors/ assessors	As above	Academic Manager/ Operations Manager	Improvement in the students' subsequent submissions Student-staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes and report Survey analysis and report
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• review the effectiveness and efficiency of its committees	Academic Committee performs at an organisational level and meets once a	Once a year usually around December	Senior lecturers, Academic Manager, Operations	Formal Academic Committee meetings held at least once a year	Operations Director	Academic Committee meeting minutes and actions to be

(paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2)	year to discuss and review the following:	of every year	Manager and Operations Director	which would be recorded		tracked in the subsequent meetings
	Overall implementation of the external reference points	As above	As above	Ensuring that updated external reference points are implemented	As above	The Quality Code
	Implementation of the standards in the Academic and Admissions Department	As above	As above	Ensuring that standards are implemented in both the departments	As above	Academic Meeting report and minutes
	Managing approval, withdrawal and delivery of the course and conducting the course reviews	As above	As above	Annual course reviews	As above	Annual Course review report Student progression report
	Discuss any concerns raised by the students	As above	As above	Implementation of issues raised in Student-staff Liaison Committee and student survey report	As above	Student-staff Liaison Committee report and minutes Student survey report
	Review of the Academic Committee roles and membership attendance	As above	As above	Any new changes of roles and membership reflected in Academic Committee report	As above	Academic Committee Report
	Academic meeting	Quarterly	Operations	Meetings held with	Operations	Academic meeting

	which functions at the departmental level would be held on a quarterly basis to discuss and review the following:		Manager Academic Manager and all other academic staff members	minutes and action plans recorded	Director	minutes and actions to be tracked in the subsequent meetings
	Implementation of quality and standards in the management of courses and curriculum	As above	As above	Implementation of the Quality Code and the College's Quality Assurance Manual	Operations Director	Quality Assurance Manual Edexcel's Programme Specification
	To review and issue an action plan report in response to Edexcel's recommendations	As above	As above	Implementation of Edexcel's recommendations	Operations Director	Edexcel's external verifier's report
	To develop and implement the academic staff development activities	As above	As above	Arrangement of in-house training activities for the academic staff members	Operations Director	Staff appraisal report Teaching observation report
	To share good practices among the team	As above	As above	Inclusion of a good practices section in the Academic Meeting report	Operations Director	Academic meeting report
• engage more thoroughly with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraphs	Conducting programme design and approval process (*Chapter B1*: *Programme design*	Once a year	Once a year usually around June/July of every year depending upon	Course-specific handbook developed	Operations Manager	Annual course review report

1.4 and 2.2)	*and approval* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)		the end of the cycle			
	Development of a college-customised course handbook that will include information about progression pathway, accreditation of prior learning, grade descriptors and so on besides unit information (*Chapter B3: Learning and teaching and B4*: *Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)	June 2013	Action taken for distance learning students	Distribution of course handbooks to students	Academic Manager	Annual course review report
	Meeting with Edexcel external verifier (*Chapter B7*: *Programme monitoring and review* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)	Once a year usually around June/July of every year depending upon the end of the cycle	Academic Manager/ Operations Manager	External verification done by the Edexcel external verifier during his/her visit	Operations Director	Edexcel external verifier report

	Development of distance learning information pack (*Chapter B3: Learning and teaching and B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education)	Action taken for distance learning students	Operations Manager	Distance learning information pack which comprises academic appeals procedure, complaints policy, distance learning student handbook, virtual learning environment student user guide and virtual learning environment induction booklet has already been prepared and uploaded on our virtual learning environment for the students	Operations Director	Academic appeals procedure, complaints policy, distance learning student handbook, virtual learning environment induction booklet and user guide uploaded on the virtual learning environment
	Collection and analysis of data concerning students' feedback survey (*Chapter B5: Student engagement* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education	Quarterly in line with the four intakes of the year starting from April 2013	College Administrator	Survey analysis and report and the information from these documents would be fed into Academic Committee meetings and Academic meetings	Operations Manager/ Operations Director	Survey analysis and report/ Academic Committee meeting minutes/ Academic Meetings minutes
	Collection of data concerning students' progression,	Quarterly with first data to be	Operations Manager	Data concerning students' progression,	Operations Manager/ Operations	Statistics regarding students' progression,

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	retention and performance for the purpose of annual course review (*Chapter B8*: *Programme monitoring and review* of the Quality Code)	collected in April 2013 This data collection would be consistent with the four intakes per year		retention and performance to be extracted from the students' database quarterly in line with the four intakes in a year This information would be fed into Academic Committee meetings	Director	retention and progression Academic Committee meeting minutes
	Developing Quality Assurance Manual to raise the awareness of the Quality Code across the staff	April 2013	Operations Manager	Quality Assurance Manual will be developed and shared among the entire team	Operations Director	Developed Quality Assurance Manual available for the reference of the staff members
	Training of the staff member regarding the Quality Code	First training in April 2013 followed by quarterly training sessions	Operations Manager/ Academic Manager/Senior Lecturer	Raised awareness of the staff members regarding the Quality Code	Operations Director	Demonstration of knowledge of the Quality Code via quiz or question and answer session
• systematically gather and analyse student opinion (paragraphs 2.2 and 2.6)	Collection and analysis of data concerning students' feedback survey	Quarterly in line with the four intakes of the year starting from April 2013	College Administrator	Survey analysis and report and the information from these documents would be fed into Academic Committee	Operations Manager/ Operations Director	Survey analysis and report Academic Committee meeting minutes

				meetings and Academic meetings		Academic Meetings minutes
• provide induction and initial guidance to distance learners that fully prepares them for their learning (paragraph 2.9)	Development of distance learning information pack	Action taken for distance learning students	Operations Manager	Distance learning information pack that comprises of academic appeals procedure, complaints policy, distance learning student handbook, virtual learning environment student user guide and virtual learning environment induction booklet has already been prepared and uploaded on our virtual learning environment for the students	Operations Director	Academic appeals procedure, complaints policy, distance learning student handbook, virtual learning environment induction booklet and user guide already prepared, approved and uploaded on the virtual learning environment
• review all information given to distance learning students to ensure that it is comprehensive and relevant to their learning needs (paragraph 3.2)	Distance learning information pack would be reviewed and made available at website besides virtual learning environment for both prospective and existing students	Biannually starting from March 2013	Operations Manager	All the documents within the distance learning information pack would be reviewed biannually, or out of this cycle if prompted by need to make any amendments due to legislative,	Operations Director	Amendments incorporated into the documents within the distance learning information pack quarterly, or as dictated by circumstantial changes

				environmental or policy changes		
• establish clear systems for reviewing and updating public information to ensure accuracy and reliability (paragraph 3.3).	A dedicated person will be appointed as an in charge to manage the versions of the public information documents	February 2013	Operations Manager	A dedicated staff member who will manage the version of the document and will also ensure that one amendment is translated into all the documents	Operations Director	Appropriate management of the various versions of the documents and the amendments translated into all the documents
	A public information policy would be developed according to which all the documents made public would be reviewed for accuracy, reliability and currency	April 2013 Policy would be reviewed biannually	Operations Manager	Public information policy in place which states the sequence and the responsible person for public information approval process	Operations Director	A developed public information policy
	The copies of all the updated documents would be saved in the Controlled Documents folder in the shared documents	As above	Operations Manager	Updated versions of the documents are saved in the Controlled Documents folder	Operations Director	Controlled documents folder consists of the updated version of all the public information documents
	A public information register will be created that will maintain the version number and any	March 2013	Operations Manager	Public Information Register reflecting summary of changes and version control	Operations Director	Usage of a public information register when handling any public information document

	changes in the subsequent versions of every public information document					
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• implement current plans to improve the monitoring and control of plagiarism (paragraph 1.6)	Acquisition and implementation of anti-plagiarism software	Anti-plagiarism software has already been purchased and implemen-ted	Operations Manager/ College Administrator	Anti-plagiarism software has been purchased and implemented in order to curb the incidences of plagiarism by the students	Operations Director	Curtailment of the incidences of plagiarism among students
• check that students are fully informed of the grading criteria for all assessments (paragraph 2.10)	Incorporating the grade descriptors with indicative characteristics for 'Merit' and 'Distinction' in all the assignment briefs for HNC and HND qualifications	Action taken	Academic Manager/tutors	All the assignment briefs for HNC and HND would comprise of grade descriptors with indicative characteristics for 'Merit' and Distinction'	Operations Manager	Assignment briefs
• identify staff training needs to provide a basis for staff development and for the sharing of good practice in classroom delivery and assessment	Staff appraisals will be conducted on a six-monthly basis to identify their development needs Teaching observations would	June 2013 February 2013	Academic Manager Tutors/ Academic	Implementation of actions in response to development needs identified from these appraisals Teaching observations for	Operations Manager Operations Manager	Staff appraisal report Teaching observation report

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(paragraphs 2.11 and 2.12)	take place every semester		Manager	every tutor would be held at least once a semester		
	Good practices from the teaching observations would form part of the discussion in the Academic meetings	Next academic meeting after the teaching observation starting from March 2013	Tutors/ Academic Manager	Good practices and areas of development emerged out of the teaching observations would be discussed in the academic meetings in order to disseminate the good practices	Operations Manager	Academic meeting minutes
• develop interactive learning activities within the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.14)	More interactive materials would be added in the virtual learning environment, for example, questionnaires and exercises	Beginning from March 2013	Tutors	Students will be able to understand the theoretical concepts more effectively by undertaking these exercises	Academic Manager	Interactive lecture materials available on the virtual learning environment
• implement current plans to enhance virtual learning environment-based learning materials for distance learning programmes (paragraph 2.14).	Adding voice recordings to the lecture presentations	Beginning from March 2013	Information Technology Administrator	Lecture presentations would be added with the voice recording so that the students are able to listen besides reading	Operations Manager	All the lecture presentations would be added with the voice recording

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

awarding organisation An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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