The College of Advanced Studies

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

October 2012

Key findings about The College of Advanced Studies

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 the Association of Tourism and Hospitality Executives, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality and the Institute of Administrative Management.

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

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

Recommendations

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

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

- improve the effectiveness of the strategic oversight of academic standards by the Quality Assurance Committee (paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3)
- ensure that the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* is used effectively to develop College policies on academic standards (paragraph 1.4)
- improve the effectiveness of the teaching observation scheme (paragraph 2.4)
- improve the quality of feedback given to students on their written work (paragraph 2.6)
- improve the system of formal academic support for students (paragraph 2.8)
- improve the staff appraisal system (paragraph 2.11)
- ensure the currency of all information on its website (paragraph 3.4).

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

- enhance the internal verification procedures (paragraph 1.6)
- extend the membership of the Quality Assurance Committee (paragraph 2.5)
- develop the procedures for sharing good practice (paragraph 2.12).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](https://www.qaa.ac.uk) at The College of Advanced Studies (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Tourism and Hospitality Executives, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality and the Institute of Administrative Management. The review was carried out by Professor David Eastwood, Mr John Skinner (reviewers), and Dr Peter Steer (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 College, meetings with staff and a separate meeting with students.

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

- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*)
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- the National Qualifications Framework.

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

The College of Advanced Studies (the College) is a private provider located in the Whitechapel area of London and was incorporated in 2010. It began accepting applications at the beginning of 2011 and consequently enrolled 87 students for that academic year. The College mission statement covers several areas, including to 'serve the needs of the individual, the enterprises and the communities from which our students originate.' The College has not yet completed a full cycle of its higher education programmes. Almost all students are from overseas. The College occupies three self-contained floors within shared commercial premises.

There are three departments: Business and Management, IT and Computing, and English Language. The Principal has primary responsibility for academic matters working closely with heads of department and the Head of Admissions. He is responsible to the Director. Enrolment in the academic year 2012-13 totals 177. All students are full-time and all are funded privately.

At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations, with the number of students in brackets:

Association of Tourism and Hospitality Executives (ATHE)
- Extended Diploma in Management - level 4 (16)
- Extended Diploma in Management - level 5 (35)
- Diploma in Management - level 6 (30)
- Diploma in Strategic Management - level 7 (32)
- Diploma in Healthcare Management - level 7 (4)

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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.

Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH)
- Diploma in Tourism Management - level 4 (6)

Institute of Administrative Management (IAM)
- Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management - level 6 (54)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College has the responsibility for recruitment and admissions, and also for the provision of appropriate resources, teaching and student support to successfully deliver the awards. On the ATHE awards, the College uses the assessments recommended by the awarding organisation. It has responsibility for first marking, moderation, and feedback to students. ATHE undertakes external moderation of the work. The College provides feedback and internal moderation on some modules of the level 6 Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management. However, these IAM students are yet to undertake any summative assessment. The College only provides formative feedback to students on the level 4 Diploma in Tourism Management. While the awarding organisations provide some course-level information for students, the main responsibility for public information lies with the College.

Recent developments

The number of students has increased considerably since the academic year 2010-11. There have been changes in the awards offered, with the College no longer providing teaching for qualifications provided by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. The College is offering courses that have not recruited sufficiently to start, for example some British Computer Society awards.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team, but did not do so. Students met the review coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the team during the review. Their involvement was helpful for the team and provided an insight into a number of topics, including the provision of resources and student support.

Detailed findings about The College of Advanced Studies

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has clear responsibilities for the management of standards on behalf of its three awarding organisations. Each of the awarding organisations produces its own detailed programme specifications and requires the College to manage the delivery of the content. The ATHE delegates the initial assessment of written summative assessments to the College and undertakes external verification of those assessments. The IAM will moderate the College's assessment of portfolios and project work when necessary, but as yet this has not been required. The IAM and CTH set and mark their own assessments.

1.2 The Quality Assurance Committee has provided an effective forum for some aspects of the management of standards. This committee consists of the College's four most senior managers: the Director, the Principal who chairs the committee, the Head of Centre and Marketing, and the Head of Admissions. It has responsibility for designing and implementing effective policies for the guidance of staff and students on academic matters. It is also the forum for making decisions about the programmes to be offered by the College. The drafting of policies resulting from the deliberations of the Committee is the responsibility of the Head of Admissions. The Quality Assurance Committee delegates responsibility for the detailed implementation of academic decisions it has made to the Principal. Other decisions are delegated to the relevant senior managers on the Committee. For the first time this year, the Quality Assurance Committee is due to receive the annual College review and annual course reviews, which were completed just before the team's visit. It has already considered a number of useful reports, for example on student recruitment and retention, and also course viability, which have resulted in action. The Quality Assurance Committee meets on a regular monthly basis, with the same agenda, covering key aspects for the oversight of the provision. It has produced a quality assurance handbook, which provides valuable guidance for staff especially on College regulations and the implications of UK Border Agency policies. By the nature of its discussions and the resultant actions, the committee has provided effective management of some aspects of the provision, for example concerning admissions and progression.

1.3 The Quality Assurance Committee has not provided a strategic oversight in some areas. The relatively recent formation of this committee in January 2012 has not been sufficient for it to undertake the complete range of its stated purposes. For example, there has been little consideration of the *Code of practice* relevant to academic standards or the development of systems to identify and disseminate effective academic practice. Often the focus of the Committee has been on operational rather than strategic academic matters. The College has identified the desirability of strengthening the membership of the Committee by including external members. It is advisable for the College to improve the effectiveness of the strategic oversight of academic standards by the Quality Assurance Committee.

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

1.4 The College has not always made full use of external reference points in its management of academic standards. The College properly follows the requirements of its awarding organisations. To assure academic standards, it relies primarily on its awarding organisations to provide programmes of study and rules of operation that conform to the expectations of the Qualifications and Credit Framework or the National Qualifications

Framework. However, the Quality Assurance Committee has not considered in detail the guidance on standards offered by the *Code of practice.* For example**,** the College offers a considerable number of programmes on its website, all of which have been approved by the respective awarding organisations. However, a detailed consideration of the implications of running these programmes from a College prospective, informed by *the Code of practice*, *Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review,* has often not occurred. The *Code of practice*, *Section 6: Assessment of students* has not been considered in detail to enhance practice in the areas of assessment for which the College has responsibility, for example feedback to students. It is advisable for the College to ensure that the *Code of practice* is used effectively to develop College policies on academic standards.

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

1.5   The College's system of annual monitoring provides some valuable information for evaluating the provision, but has not completed a full cycle of operation. The College has developed a system of annual monitoring based on course reports and an overall report covering the whole provision. These reports include valuable information, often of a statistical nature, on a number of key areas of course operation, including recruitment and progression. However, they have only a limited amount of evaluative comment. The reporting process includes student feedback on teaching at the module level through questionnaires, but no formal input from student representatives. The effectiveness of the system cannot yet be determined because the reports have not yet been considered by the Quality Assurance Committee. At the time of this review, there had been no external verification of student work and, consequently, the College has received no external examiner reports.

1.6   Internal verification does not always make full use of the opportunities to identify areas for improvement. A sample of student work for the ATHE awards showed that it had been internally verified in a structured manner using an appropriate sample. However, the internal verification was sometimes limited in scope and missed opportunities to advise the first marker on improved practice for the future. Opportunities for detailed comments provided by the internal verification form were rarely used. For example, although feedback to students on their work was not detailed, internal verifiers made few comments about this to help staff provide better feedback. The internal verifier also did not comment on the failure of some students to complete the coursework assessment coversheet by signing the plagiarism declaration as required by the College. Students on the IAM awards have not yet undertaken any written work. For the CTH, students do no written work of any kind overseen by the College. It is desirable for the College to enhance the internal verification procedures.

> 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 organisations.

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 College is responsible for all aspects of its provision with respect to the quality of learning opportunities. As well as academic decisions, the Quality Assurance Committee is the forum for decision-making on resource issues led by the Director, who is also the

finance director. The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 are also relevant to the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.

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

2.2   The College engages effectively with a variety of external reference points relevant to the quality of learning opportunities. These include the regulations of the awarding organisations and the UK Border Agency, and the guidance of the *Code of practice.* For example, the College's admissions policy is clearly aligned with the *Code of practice*, *Section 10: Admissions to higher education* and with *Section 3: Disabled students.* The College makes proper use of these external reference points in its Quality Assurance Handbook, which is issued to all staff.

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

2.3   The College has clear policies to oversee teaching. It does not publish a formal teaching and learning strategy. However, comprehensive teaching and learning policies and procedures have been established and are contained in the College's Quality Assurance Handbook and Guidance on Teaching and Learning, both of which are issued to all teaching staff. There is a comprehensive staff appointment policy incorporating detailed procedures. As a result of this policy, teaching staff have previous teaching experience in their field and possess teaching qualifications.

2.4   The College operates a structured, peer-reviewed observation of teaching and learning scheme, although the effectiveness is limited by a lack of follow-up action. All tutors undergo peer observation every three months. The College policy is to link these observations to staff appraisal. After verbal feedback from the observer, an improvement action sheet is agreed and signed. However, in succeeding observations, there is little evidence of the agreed actions being implemented. Additionally, the outcomes and targets from the observations are not reflected in the annual staff appraisal procedures. All new staff are observed at least once by the Principal during their first two weeks of teaching and are subsequently peer-observed at least once every three months. There is little evidence, however, of any formal process to guide implementation and support new staff to improve their teaching. It is advisable for the College to improve the effectiveness of the teaching observation scheme.

2.5   The membership of the Quality Assurance Committee limits its effectiveness in overseeing learning and teaching. The self-evaluation recognises the desirability of members of the Committee having more pedagogical experience. Currently, most members of the Quality Assurance Committee have responsibilities mainly outside the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment. Also, there is no student representation on the Quality Assurance Committee. Recognising the limitations of this in the face of rising student numbers, the College is currently planning to implement a system of elected course-based student representatives. It is desirable for the College to extend the membership of the Quality Assurance Committee.

2.6   Feedback to students on their work provides only limited support for learning. At present, the College has only provided written feedback on summative student work for the ATHE awards. The team considered a sample of this work. The feedback to students lacked detail as to the exact nature of any weaknesses of the work and specific guidance as to how to improve. It provided students with only limited guidance helpful in preparing their

assessments in the future. It is advisable to improve the quality of feedback given to students on their written work.

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

2.7   Students receive some effective support throughout their course, although much of it is on an informal basis. The College operates an effective two-phase induction programme for new students, involving one at the College level and another at the course level led by the relevant class tutor. Students receive comprehensive information about the College and the nature of their individual courses. Student support during the courses operates at an individual and informal level. Students stated that when they raise academic problems teaching staff are approachable and helpful, and provide effective support. They are also able to get advice from the Principal.

2.8   The College has not ensured that students receive all the formal academic support they need. It does not operate a personal tutor system and students seeking help usually need to approach a member of staff. The College aims to provide more formal and structured help through individual learning plans. However, the development of these plans is at an early stage, with few students having completed one. The number of students has risen considerably, increasing the pressure on staff availability. Without a formal system of academic support, there is the increasing potential for students who do not contact a member of staff not to get the support they need. It is advisable for the College to improve the system of formal academic support for students.

2.9   Pastoral support on non-academic matters is readily available on request from a student welfare officer, who is also the Head of Centre and Marketing. This support includes general counselling and more specific advice, for example on financial or employment issues. Students confirmed that this advice is helpful.

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

2.10   The College provides some useful professional development opportunities. Staff have qualifications appropriate to the subjects they teach. The primary responsibility for identifying external training needs and undertaking subject-specific staff development lies with individual staff members. All staff on long-term contracts are offered at least one opportunity to participate in pre-paid external training, for example the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualification. Recent take-up of opportunities for staff development by both academic and administrative staff has been strong. In addition, all tutors are required to attend seminars organised by the awarding organisations. The College provides a staff induction programme, during which new staff are introduced to the College's policies and practices and are provided with a copy of the College's comprehensive Guidance on Teaching and Learning.

2.11   The annual appraisal system is not fully effective in monitoring staff development or identifying staff development opportunities. Line managers appraise teaching staff annually in order to evaluate an individual's development needs. However, this appraisal is restricted in scope, being based largely on a review of annual results arising from internal student feedback and peer teaching observations. There is little evidence that these form the basis of any ongoing process of detailed development planning with clear target dates for implementation. It is advisable for the College to improve the staff appraisal system.

2.12   Opportunities for staff development through the sharing of good practice are not fully developed. The College identifies some staff development opportunities through staff

appraisal and peer observations of teaching. However, such priorities are mainly individual-specific and largely unstructured, and represent a limited basis for any sharing of good practice of a generic nature. For example, the College currently disseminates aspects of good teaching practice, when identified by the Quality Assurance Committee, through 'notices, memos and meetings'. Staff find this beneficial. However, there is no formal College system for the ongoing collecting and sharing of good teaching and learning practice. It is desirable for the College to develop the procedures for sharing good practice.

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　　Resources provide suitable support for students to achieve the learning outcomes. The building has capacity for 500 students; the teaching rooms are well equipped and wireless internet access is available throughout the building. Information technology resources are appropriate for the number of students and the awards they are studying. The College has recently invested in additional hardware and software, which the students find valuable. Library provision at the College is currently limited, but is undergoing expansion. This provision is supplemented by extensive online resources provided by the awarding organisations and the ready availability of local libraries. The College has a virtual learning environment that provides students with both valuable teaching and learning materials and information about their courses. There are modest, but useful, social facilities, including a cafeteria/common room. The College obtains feedback from students on resources by means of a questionnaire. Students stated that the resources available to them provide suitable support for their learning and that the College responds positively to their feedback on resource issues.

2.14　　The College does not provide opportunities for work-based learning. Its courses do not require placements and the College does not currently offer any optional placement opportunities.

The review team has **confidence** that the College 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　　A variety of useful information relevant to study at the College is available to prospective students. The College is responsible for most of the information it provides for students, although the awarding organisations supply at least some course-level material. Its website contains details of all the courses offered and the associated entry requirements. The prospectus is currently only available in hard copy on request. It provides a basic but valuable introduction to the College and its courses. A new version is in preparation and will be published both on the College's website and in hard copy. The College also produces a range of marketing materials; for example fliers and advertisements in local newspapers. The students stated that the information they received before arrival correctly described the College and its provision.

3.2　　Students receive a range of informative course materials. They receive a hard copy of a helpful pre-arrival information pack followed by a college-level handbook at induction.

The College publishes handbooks for each of the ATHE awards. These contain college-specific information together with guidance about the individual courses direct from the awarding organisation. The IAM and CTH students receive their course materials through online access to the websites of the awarding organisations. For all courses, the College has a policy stating the documentation to be made available on the virtual learning environment. For example, all students have access to their course handbooks and information concerning unit delivery, including timetables, schemes of work and assessment calendars. Students find the virtual learning environment easily accessible both on and off the College site. They stated that the course materials they receive are valuable in supporting their studies.

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

3.3   There are effective mechanisms to check that most information is accurate and complete, although these do not include a formal review of the whole website on a regular basis. Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of published information is divided between the Head of Admissions, who is responsible for all hard copy written materials, and the Head of Centre and Marketing, who is responsible for the accuracy of digital information. Updating of both hard copy and digital information is normally informally reviewed on a bimonthly basis, or after the College has made changes to its policies, or there have been legislative changes. This has resulted in course handbooks and the virtual learning environment being suitably updated to maintain currency. However, there is no formal process for checking that all the information on the website is still accurate, unless triggered by an explicit management or Quality Assurance Committee instruction.

3.4   The College website is generally informative and accessible, but there are a few examples of out-of-date material not being removed. Most material on the website is accurate and informative. Students stated that they found the information they had received about their courses to be both accurate and useful. It had allowed them to select the College and their course on an informed basis**.** However, at the time of the review, the website was still advertising programmes from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants which the College no longer runs. The information on the visa and work regulations was misleading for new students while accurate for students whose visas have been issued in the past. The College advertises a number of courses for which it has validation and uses this tool for gauging student demand. The staff stated that the aim now is to concentrate on business and management courses. At the time of the review, courses in other areas, for example a Diploma in Legal Studies, were still being advertised, although there is little likelihood of them running. It is advisable for the College to ensure the currency of all information on its website.

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

Action plan[3]

The College of Advanced Studies action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight October 2012						
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• improve the effectiveness of the strategic oversight of academic standards by the Quality Assurance Committee (paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3)	Review the terms of reference for the Quality Assurance Committee	14 January 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Quality Assurance Committee addresses strategic issues affecting the quality of academic standards	Quality Assurance Committee	Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes
	Update the College review process to include a pre-scheduled post-review meeting	14 January 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee			Updated College review guidance
	Create the recommended agenda for the annual post-review Quality Assurance Committee meeting, including more focus on strategic oversight of academic standards	14 January 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee			
	Hold a Quality Assurance	12 April 2013	Principal			

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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 organisations.

	Committee strategic meeting with detailed minute-taking					
• ensure that the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* is used effectively to develop College policies on academic standards (paragraph 1.4)	Create and implement guidance on programme approval, monitoring and review	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Portfolio of College guidance further incorporates the *Code of practice*	Principal/Quality Assurance Committee	Annual review of policies
	Ensure that all other policies are reviewed and developed in line with the *Code of practice*	25 October 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	All programmes are officially approved prior to course start		
• improve the effectiveness of the teaching observation scheme (paragraph 2.4)	Link observations of teaching and learning to annual staff appraisals	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Updated Observation of Teaching and Learning Handbook is approved and implemented	Principal/Quality Assurance Committee	Feedback from students on quality of teaching
	Review and update Observation of Teaching and Learning Handbook	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Observers make use of and refer to previous observations		Staff appraisals Course reviews
	Amend observation of teaching and learning forms to incorporate involvement of previously completed observation of teaching and learning forms	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Where a development requirement is identified, additional support is provided Tutors		

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				demonstrate planned enhancement as a direct result of feedback from observations Improved module pass rates Improved attendance, retention and punctuality of students		
• improve the quality of feedback given to students on their written work (paragraph 2.6)	Ensure that all assessors of level 6 and 7 modules attend external training on assessment of higher level work	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	The quality of written feedback to students improves in content and breadth	Principal/Quality Assurance Committee	Feedback from students Course review Internal verifier reports External verifier reports
	Amend form used for student assessment feedback to include: more space for commenting on each learning outcome or objective; and sections for overall areas of strengths and weaknesses; and a section for suggestions for	14 January 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee			

	preparing future assessments					
• improve the system of formal academic support for students (paragraph 2.8)	Ensure that an Individual Learning Plan is completed for all students	12 April 2013	Tutors	Students demonstrate planned enhancement as a direct result of feedback from tutorials	Principal	Feedback from students
	Introduce and implement an effective formal personal tutor system	12 April 2013	Tutors and Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Increased module pass rates		
• improve the staff appraisal system (paragraph 2.11)	Update and implement a process of detailed staff development planning with clear target dates for implementation	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Staff members demonstrate planned enhancement as a direct result of feedback from appraisals	Principal/Quality Assurance Committee	Staff appraisal and development records
	Link observations of teaching and learning to annual staff appraisals	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Where a development requirement is identified, additional support is provided		
• ensure the currency of all information on its website (paragraph 3.4).	Periodically check and update all content on College website	7 January 2013, once a month thereafter and whenever required	Head of Centre and Marketing	Public information is current and relevant to enable prospective students to make informed decisions

All website links | Quality Assurance Committee | Analysis of student admission figures

Feedback obtained from prospective students during application |

				are valid All downloads consist of most recent versions of documents Only courses which are currently running or are likely to be running within six months are advertised		process Feedback obtained from current students
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:						
• enhance the internal verification procedures (paragraph 1.6)	Review policy on internal verification Redefine the role of internal verifiers to include checking student declarations on submitted assessments Have all internal verifiers update their training Ensure that a sample	14 January 2013 14 January 2013 12 April 2013 14 January	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee Head of Centre and Marketing Principal	All student submission declarations are signed Internal verification forms are completed comprehensively	Quality Assurance Committee	Feedback from Principal on quality of internal verification Course reviews External verifier report

	of completed internal verification forms from each assessor is periodically checked for accuracy, breadth and relevance	2013 and every three months thereafter				
• extend the membership of the Quality Assurance Committee (paragraph 2.5)	Extend membership of the Quality Assurance Committee to include one of the elected course-based student representatives	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Extended membership of Quality Assurance Committee, including a student and another member of academic staff	Quality Assurance Committee	Quality Assurance Committee minutes Feedback from students Feedback from tutors
	Extend membership of the Quality Assurance Committee to include member of the academic staff with extensive external experience	12 April 2013	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	More efficient academic department Faster dissemination of information to students		
• develop the procedures for sharing good practice (paragraph 2.12).	Arrange and hold biannual structured, internal staff training days for developing skills, sharing good practice, and facilitating team cohesion	12 April 2013 and approximately every six months thereafter	Head of Centre and Marketing	More effective staff Increased cohesion between staff	Principal	Staff appraisal and development records Feedback from staff

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.