



Alpha Meridian College

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

November 2012

Key findings about Alpha Meridian College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in November 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 Business Executives; Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT; and The Institute for the Management of Information Systems.

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.

Good practice

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

- financial and mentoring support for staff undertaking staff development (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:

- clarify the function and relationship of its Quality Monitoring Group and staff meetings (paragraph 1.2)
- update its Quality Assurance Manual to improve its effectiveness (paragraph 1.3)
- strengthen its annual monitoring process (paragraphs 1.4, 2.6 and 2.9)
- engage fully with the appropriate external reference points (paragraph 1.6)
- implement the teaching observation system consistently (paragraph 2.4)
- strengthen systems for managing and enhancing resources to meet student needs (paragraph 2.14).

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

- moderate assessment setting, marking and feedback for internal formative assessments (paragraphs 1.8 and 2.5)
- enhance academic guidance and pastoral tutorial provision (paragraph 2.8)
- formalise the process of appraising and developing staff (paragraph 2.11)
- review arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information published online (paragraph 3.2).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Alpha Meridian College (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College 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 College delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives; Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT; and The Institute for the Management of Information Systems. The review was carried out by Dr Colin Fryer, Mr Mark Langley, Dr Mark Rawlinson (reviewers), and Dr John Hurley (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 documents supplied by the provider and awarding organisations, meetings with staff and students.

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

- Qualifications and Credit Framework
- awarding organisation award specifications.

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

Alpha Meridian College, Greenwich (the College), was formed from the amalgamation of two private colleges: the Alpha School of English, founded in 1994, and the Meridian College of Computing, which opened three years later. The College draws students from the UK and EU countries, but predominantly from countries outside the EU. It provides full-time courses in Accountancy, Business Management, Information Systems, Information Technology, and Travel Tourism and Hospitality Management at levels 4 to 6. Since its foundation, the College has taught courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and is a recognised University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations centre.

The College has a single campus within Meridian House, a former town hall, in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Meridian House is shared with the Greenwich School of Management, which is an independent organisation. There has been some fluctuation in student numbers over the last three years. Enrolment at the time of the visit was 307 students, all full-time, of whom 98 per cent are international students. Of these, 22 students are following lower level English language courses.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations, with full-time student numbers shown in brackets:

The Institute for the Management of Information Systems (IMIS)

- Management of Information Systems:
 - Diploma (NQF level 4) (24)
 - Higher Diploma (NQF level 5) (29)

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

- Information Technology:
 - Professional Graduate Diploma (NQF level 6) (25)
 - Diploma (NQF level 5) (11)

Association of Business Executives (ABE)

- Business Management:
 - Higher Diploma (NQF level 5) (41)
 - Graduate Integrated Diploma (NQF levels 5 and 6) (73)
 - Graduate Diploma (NQF level 6) (13)
- Travel Tourism and Hospitality Management:
 - Higher Diploma (NQF level 5) (11)
 - Extended Diploma (NQF levels 5 and 6) (11)
 - Graduate Diploma (NQF level 6) (5)

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

- Accountancy:
 - Papers F4, F5, F6 and F7 (NQF level 6) (42)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College currently prepares students for the external examinations of its awarding organisations. Its responsibilities are limited to preparing students adequately for the examinations and providing appropriate learning resources. The College also has agreements with the University of the West of England, Bristol through the Management Development Partnership, and with Edge Hill University for programmes that have not yet been initiated. In both cases, the agreements require the College to run programmes to the strictly defined requirements of the awarding bodies.

Recent developments

The College is mid-way through a planned process of transition, which includes the development of its quality assurance systems, currently partly implemented, to meet the requirements of university partners. This is intended to enable the College to introduce programmes at degree level and eventually postgraduate level, offering progression opportunities to its students. The College is currently recruiting for University of the West of England/Management Development Partnership courses. The agreement with Edge Hill University is signed, but not yet activated. The College has made the appointment of a Vice-Principal and is intending to appoint a Head of Studies to steer these developments.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Students were not able to provide a submission. They met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting to discuss their contribution to the process. During the review visit, they met members of the review team at a private meeting and shared an open and balanced evaluation of the College with reviewers. This has informed the subsequent report, confirming other sources of evidence.

Detailed findings about Alpha Meridian College

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has a small and effective management and administration team. Lines of accountability are clearly understood by the management team. The Principal leads both administrative and academic functions within the College and is the point of contact with the awarding organisations. The Vice-Principal oversees the management of academic standards and a Director of Operations focuses upon the operational delivery of programmes of study. As part of the College's review of its quality assurance systems, programme leaders have responsibility for standards at programme level and report to the Vice-Principal. The College is in the process of reshaping its management responsibilities, and, as part of this process, is reviewing the quality reporting procedures. While evidence of the proposed changes was made available, the review team concluded that these were not yet sufficiently embedded to comment on their effectiveness in assuring the delivery of academic standards.

1.2 The management team and teaching staff work effectively together, but there is a reliance on informal interactions among its members. Informal interactions and ad hoc meetings do not provide a systematic approach to the oversight of quality and standards, which in future may compromise standards. There is evidence that the College is developing its deliberative structures, but that these are at an early stage. The implementation of its proposed Quality Monitoring Group and the staff meetings that report to it, would expedite the establishment of a framework for quality assurance. The membership of the various staff meetings and the Quality Monitoring Group are formally documented by the College, but their relative powers and lines of reporting are not defined by terms of reference or clear responsibilities. The College is well aware of these shortcomings and is taking steps to clarify its activities and to improve formal communications. It is advisable for the College to clarify the functions and relationship of its Quality Monitoring Group and staff meetings.

1.3 There is a College Quality Assurance Manual, but it provides insufficient detail about the quality systems in operation at the time of the visit. Further clarification of annual monitoring requirements, student representation and details of the deliberative structures are required. The manual offers only limited guidance on several important areas, including student evaluation and the role of departmental meetings in the assurance of academic standards. The manual does not yet encompass the full range of the College quality assurance framework so that it becomes the overarching operational document for the management of academic standards. It is advisable for the College to update its Quality Assurance Manual to improve its effectiveness.

1.4 The College's annual monitoring process contributes to improvement, but requires enhancement. The process comprises a programme level report that provides limited qualitative evaluation of the provision. Annual reports are not sufficiently systematic and analytical, and make little use of quantitative data, for example student evaluation to monitor the effectiveness of programmes. While issues arising from annual monitoring are identified, the locus of responsibility for each action is not specified, and there is a lack of clarity as to how progress is monitored and reviewed. It is advisable that the College strengthens its annual monitoring process to ensure that it systematically reviews programmes and takes due account of all relevant evidence.

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

1.5 External reference points underpin the College's maintenance of academic standards. The College diligently adheres to the requirements set out in the awarding organisations' accreditation or registration handbooks, particularly in respect of the roles and delegated responsibilities for managing academic standards. These are appropriately understood and correctly interpreted by the College.

1.6 The College has taken only limited independent account of the Academic Infrastructure and no reference to it is made in the College's Quality Assurance Manual. College management processes have yet to be explicitly mapped against the relevant sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). However, the College's future partnership arrangements with the University of the West of England, Bristol and Edge Hill University will require full engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and its replacement UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). It is advisable that the College engages fully with the appropriate external reference points and, in particular, the Quality Code.

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

1.7 The awarding organisations are responsible for setting summative assessments and marking student assignments and examination papers. Teaching staff at the College play no part in designing assignment briefs or examination questions, and have no involvement in marking or moderating student summative work. The awarding organisations are solely responsible for the appointment of examiners, moderation of assessed work and the formal monitoring of assessment practice.

1.8 The College uses a system of formative assessments, which require further development if the College is to take more responsibility for assessment. They show the understanding of awarding organisation requirements identified in paragraph 1.5 and contribute appropriately to student learning. However, there is no internal moderation of the assignments set, marking or feedback to students, which are of variable standards. While formative assignment briefs make a positive contribution in preparing students for the awarding organisations' external examinations, the absence of moderation inhibits the sharing of good practice. It is desirable that the College implements a moderation process for assessment setting, marking and feedback for internal formative assessments.

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 quality of learning opportunities are assured through management and reporting structures outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4. Student evaluation is sought and the College is encouraging the development of a student representation system. There is evidence that these have had some beneficial impact, but, as noted in paragraph 1.4, there is scope to develop these systems.

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

2.2 As noted in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6, the College meets the requirements of its awarding organisations, but makes little direct reference to the *Code of practice*.

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

2.3 All members of teaching staff have a master's qualification and some have a recognised teaching qualification. The College aspires to a situation where all teaching staff have relevant teaching qualifications and appropriate degrees in their subject areas, but does not have a formal appointment policy to achieve this. The College does not have a learning and teaching strategy, but relies on good teaching to direct students to appropriate learning opportunities and to mitigate acknowledged deficits in the provision of learning resources. Students confirmed that this expectation is fulfilled.

2.4 Mechanisms to assure and enhance the quality of teaching and learning require further development. Observation of teaching is undertaken in the College, and its role in probation, staff development and the sharing of best practice is understood. The scheme of observation is not being used consistently and systematically. In particular, the linkage of observation to annual appraisal and staff development is unclear. It is advisable that the teaching observation system is implemented consistently.

2.5 Formative assessment and feedback to students is used to help develop their learning and preparation for external examinations. The team examined a small sample of formative assessments. Assignment tasks are often based on past examination papers. Marking and feedback are variable in quality. Observed feedback ranges from detailed and helpfully formative comments to short summative statements. Internal moderation would help to share better practice and increase the benefit to students.

2.6 The College seeks student evaluations of aspects of teaching and learning. It uses questionnaires which provide numerical and qualitative data on student satisfaction with teaching, course content and course administration. Analysis and action planning is the responsibility of programme leaders, who report to teachers at termly training days, and informally to the management team. There is little evidence of action planning that enhances teaching and learning arising from monitoring (see also paragraph 1.4).

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

2.7 The College provides appropriate support for international students. The Student Induction Guide points students to English language support, and the services of a Welfare Officer and a Counsellor. The section on Student Support Services in the Student Handbook is a compendium of information about life beyond the College. There is an Accommodation Support Officer. Students reported general satisfaction with the ethos and support provided the College, and the guidance they received at induction and through information provided by the College and its awarding organisations.

2.8 Academic and pastoral guidance requires some further development. The College has plans to introduce a personal tutor system. Academic guidance is currently tailored to individual students, but there is no mechanism to ensure the consistency of this provision. Tracking of students' progress through formative assessment tasks is recorded in module teacher folders and discussed at twice-termly programme meetings. There are no formal

mechanisms to ensure that this informs academic guidance. The team encourages the implementation of plans to strengthen academic and pastoral support. It is desirable that the College enhances academic guidance and pastoral tutorial provision.

2.9 There is some scope to improve management information on student support. The student evaluation questionnaire does not include questions on student support provision, which would give the College greater opportunity to enhance provision through annual monitoring. The College has, however, initiated an induction questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of its guidance to new students, the majority coming to the UK for the first time. Overall, the College is responsive to student support needs and is moving towards enhanced systems to manage and implement support.

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

2.10 The College actively supports its staff, which is an area of strength upon which the College could build. Staff are well qualified and 30 per cent have a recognised teaching qualification. To teach on some programmes, staff must be members of the awarding organisation, annual membership for which requires a set number of continuing professional development days. This reflects an appropriate level of scholarship within the College. Staff for the University of the West of England, Bristol programme, which is currently recruiting, must attend induction and training sessions. The College offers paid leave days to complete these activities and offers in-house training events. A member of staff has received mentoring support to gain a teaching qualification. The financial and mentoring support for staff undertaking staff development is good practice.

2.11 The staff development policy is not fully embedded and requires further articulation. The policy identifies teaching observation and its staff induction process as cornerstones of its approach to staff development. It does not reflect the positive approach to training outlined in paragraph 2.10 nor does it have a higher education focus. The College relies on teaching observations to identify its training needs (see paragraph 2.4), but only identifies staff requests for development through informal line-management conversations. There is no formally defined staff appraisal process. The College is encouraged to clarify its staff development policy to ensure that its approach to staff development is responsive to the changing needs of the institution. It is desirable that the College formalises its process of appraising and developing staff.

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

2.12 The College acknowledges a shortfall in learning resources, notably library and digital learning facilities. In a survey, students identified significant learning resource needs. Some of the shortfall has been made good by temporary measures, including the repair and upgrading of existing computer resources, provision of course information on a memory stick given to all students, and a temporary web-based information repository.

2.13 The College has informal mechanisms for maintaining and enhancing learning resources. Students and teachers may communicate recommendations through programme leaders to the Director of Operations, who is responsible for communicating decisions. Final budgetary control rests with the owner. The College has a strategic plan which refers to future investments in information technology facilities to enhance learning opportunities. Enhancement plans are not budgeted or timetabled, though reference is made to the Edge

Hill University partnership and level 7 provision as drivers. The approach to printed resources is less strategic, though the University of the West of England, Bristol/Management Development Partnership contract refers to improving library requirements.

2.14 Student evaluation of learning resources is not explicitly sought by the student questionnaire. Students reported that many resources were available from the websites of awarding organisations, and that the resource centre and local libraries, in combination, meet their needs for independent study. The College is encouraged to implement its intentions to improve resources, as it develops its relationships with university partners. It is advisable that the College strengthens systems for managing and enhancing resources to meet student needs.

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's public information about the higher education it provides is communicated effectively to students and other stakeholders. The awarding organisations publish most of the course-related information. College-produced public information centres on its website, Student Handbook and policy documents. The College disseminates these through its website and printed matter. Without access to a virtual learning environment, the College has successfully combined the use of a memory stick and website to ensure students have access to all materials. Students appreciate this greatly. The College is, however, developing its own virtual learning environment, indicating its commitment to improving its broadcasting of information.

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

3.2 The College's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information are adequate for the current provision. In line with their different agreements, the College seeks approval from each awarding organisation for any college-produced publicity materials by either oral or written request. The College's description of its process for approving information confirms the central role of the Director of Operations in approving all materials. The post-holder consults with programme leaders or other colleagues as appropriate. The process works effectively for the Student Handbook and website, which are thorough and clear. The College is less clear about how it manages online programme materials. The emerging virtual learning environment will require arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information. The College recognises its need to develop its public information policy in light of proposed growth, and also in the way it ensures its information is accessible for students with disabilities. It is desirable that the College reviews its arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information published online.

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 plan³

Alpha Meridian College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight November 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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> financial and mentoring support for staff undertaking staff development (paragraph 2.10). 	First programme leaders meeting spring term 2013: task them with making clear to teachers paid leave days and mentoring support for professional development	23 January 2013	Director of Operations, Facilitator and programme leaders	Action noted in programme leaders' meeting minutes 23 January	Principal	Quality Management Group assesses level of take-up of continuing professional development sessions or courses by teaching staff
	Quality Assurance Manual updated to describe these processes	End of spring term (week beginning 18 March 2013)	Facilitator	Quality Assurance Manual updated: revised version sent to all teachers	Vice Principal/ Director of Studies	Assessment published in annual monitoring report
	Quality Monitoring Group to assess	End of summer term (week	Quality Monitoring	Increase in take-up of continuing		Notes in completed teaching observation reports

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.

	continuing professional development participation rates and outcomes	beginning 3 June 2013	Group	professional development sessions or courses by teachers		Student evaluation forms
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify the function and relationship of its Quality Monitoring Group and staff meetings (paragraph 1.2) 	Draft terms of reference, lines of reporting and meetings timetable for the Quality Monitoring Group	31 January 2013	Facilitator	Quality Management Group meeting minutes show delivery on terms of reference	Director of Operations	College leadership confirms improved interaction and reporting
	Draft lines of reporting and meetings timetables for Programme Team meetings	11 January 2013	Director of Operations/ Facilitator	Programme Team meeting minutes show teams reporting to Quality Management Group	Director of Operations	Student representatives and student evaluation forms note improved systems
	Approve and publish Quality Management Group terms of reference, lines of reporting and meeting timetables	End of spring term (week beginning 18 March 2013)	Director of Operations	Principal notes improved interaction and reporting in annual monitoring report	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> update its Quality Assurance Manual to improve its 	Add clarification of annual monitoring requirements, student representation, role of	End of spring term (week beginning 18 March 2013)	Facilitator	Approval of revised Quality Assurance Manual by	Director of Operations	Quality Monitoring Group notes improved working of systems

effectiveness (paragraph 1.3)	Programme Team meetings and details of deliberative structures to Quality Assurance Manual			relevant programme leaders Student representatives and student evaluation forms note improved systems		Programme leaders report more effective team meetings Student representatives and student evaluation forms note increased satisfaction levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen its annual monitoring process (paragraphs 1.4, 2.6 and 2.9) 	<p>Gather more comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation of our provision from programme leaders</p> <p>Introduce more systematic analysis of student evaluation forms regarding effectiveness of programmes</p> <p>Annual monitoring report to identify where responsibility lies for specific improvements in quality</p> <p>Annual monitoring report to detail how progress on quality</p>	<p>End of academic year 2013 (week beginning 3 June 2013)</p> <p>End of academic year 2013</p> <p>End of academic year 2013</p> <p>End of summer term (week</p>	<p>Vice Principal/ Director of Studies</p> <p>Vice Principal/ Director of Studies</p> <p>Quality Monitoring Group</p> <p>Facilitator and Director of Operations</p>	<p>College leadership decisions are evidence-based</p> <p>Programme leaders are more aware of effectiveness of programmes</p> <p>Student representatives can evaluate quality improvements from evidence</p> <p>Programme teams respond to student</p>	Principal/Director of Operations	<p>Annual monitoring report includes more comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation of our provision</p> <p>Annual monitoring report identifies where responsibility lies for specific improvements in quality</p> <p>Annual monitoring report details how progress on quality improvements is to be monitored and reviewed</p>

	<p>improvements is to be monitored and reviewed</p> <p>Programme leaders to write action plans in response to student evaluation forms</p> <p>Add questions on student support in the student evaluation</p>	<p>beginning 3 June 2013)</p> <p>End of spring term (week beginning 18 March 2013)</p> <p>23 January 2013</p>	<p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Facilitator</p>	<p>evaluations</p>		<p>Student evaluation forms note improvements in programme effectiveness</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage fully with the appropriate external reference points (paragraph 1.6) 	<p>Map our management processes against relevant sections of the <i>Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality in higher education</i> in upgrades to Quality Assurance Manual</p> <p>Discuss with university partners how to engage fully with relevant external reference points in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)</p> <p>Brief programme leaders on how our management processes relate to</p>	<p>End of academic year 2013 (week beginning 3 June)</p> <p>End of academic year 2013</p> <p>End of spring term 2013</p>	<p>Facilitator</p> <p>Facilitator/ Director of Operations</p> <p>Vice Principal/ Director of Studies</p>	<p>College leadership understands how our management processes relate to the <i>Code of practice</i></p> <p>Programme leaders understand how our management processes relate to the <i>Code of practice</i></p>	<p>Principal/Director of Operations</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Manual references relevant sections of the <i>Code of practice</i></p> <p>Quality Management Group minutes for end of summer term 2013 confirm that programme leaders are aware of how our management processes relate to the <i>Code of practice</i></p>

	<i>the Code of practice</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement the teaching observation system consistently (paragraph 2.4) 	Facilitator to schedule observations of programme leaders and follow-up appraisal meetings	23 January 2013	Facilitator	Observations and appraisals take place and are recorded	Director of Operations	Student evaluation forms report improvements in teacher performance
	Programme leaders to schedule observations and appraisals for teachers	End of summer term 2013 (week beginning 3 June)	Programme leaders	Schedules recorded by Quality Monitoring Group	Facilitator	
	Programme leaders to report outcomes to Quality Management Group to inform future staff development policy	End of autumn term 2013 (late November)	Programme leaders	Teachers feel ownership of appraisal process and focus on agreed improvement targets Student evaluation forms note improved performance by teachers	Quality Management Group	Quality Management Group minutes (end of term meetings) record appraisal outcomes and decisions with regard to staff development based on these outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen systems for managing and enhancing resources to meet student needs (paragraph 2.14). 	Add questions on learning resources to student evaluation forms	End of spring term 2013	Facilitator	Students report satisfaction that their needs for better learning resources have been acknowledged	Director of Operations Principal	Student evaluation forms revised for use mid-spring term
	Discuss with student	End of spring	Vice Principal/	University	Director of	Student evaluation

	representatives their priorities for improving learning resources	term 2013	Director of Studies	partners report confidence that upgrading learning resources is planned	Operations	forms report satisfaction over plan to upgrade learning resources
	Discuss with University partners their requirements for improving learning resources	End of spring term 2013	Facilitator	College management aware of priorities for learning resources and ready to invest if funding available	The owner of the College	Communications from university partners note confidence in plan to upgrade learning resources
	Write and publish a budgeted plan for investing in improved learning resources	Start of summer term 2013 (week beginning 8 April)	Director of Operations			
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moderate assessment setting, marking and feedback for internal formative assessments (paragraphs 1.8 and 2.5) 	Programme leaders plan an internal moderation process for setting, marking and feedback of internal formative assessments (homework and practice tests)	23 January 2013	Programme leaders	Better practice in setting, marking, and feedback for internal formative assessments has been shared by all teachers	Facilitator/Director of Operations	Samples of good practice in setting, marking and feedback for internal formative assessments available to all teachers and appropriate external bodies/ organisations
	Internal moderation	End of spring	Programme	Learning	Principal	

	<p>process carried out within and where appropriate across departments</p> <p>Process and outcomes discussed with student representatives for their feedback</p> <p>Process and outcomes evaluated by Quality Monitoring Group</p>	<p>term 2013</p> <p>End of summer term 2013</p> <p>End of academic year 2013 (week beginning 3 June)</p>	<p>leaders and teachers</p> <p>Vice Principal/ Director of Studies</p> <p>Quality Monitoring Group</p>	<p>opportunities for students improved by consistently high quality of setting, marking and feedback</p> <p>Quality Monitoring Group better informed by outcomes in directing future academic policies</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Facilitator/Vice-Principal/Director of Studies</p>	<p>Student evaluation forms record student approval of improved setting, marking and feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhance academic guidance and pastoral tutorial provision (paragraph 2.8) 	<p>Programme leaders advised that a personal tutor system will be introduced</p> <p>Guidelines published for conduct of meetings between personal tutors and students</p> <p>New student cohort meets personal tutors during induction</p> <p>Personal tutors trial</p>	<p>23 January 2013</p> <p>31 January 2013</p> <p>Early February 2013</p> <p>By end of</p>	<p>Facilitator/ Director of Operations</p> <p>Facilitator</p> <p>Personal tutors and students</p> <p>Personal tutors</p>	<p>First group of students are well supported by personal tutors well acquainted with their academic progress and pastoral issues</p> <p>Teachers engaged with the well-being of their students</p> <p>College</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Director of Operations</p> <p>Vice Principal/Director of Studies and facilitator</p> <p>Facilitator/Vice</p>	<p>Sample reports from personal tutors on the operation of the new system filed with the Vice Principal/Director of Studies</p> <p>Student evaluation forms report increased satisfaction with support on academic progress and pastoral issues</p>

	forms to record interviews with students Quality Monitoring Group gathers evidence from tutors and students on progress of system to inform evaluation	summer term 2013 End of autumn term 2013 (late November)	Quality Management Group	leadership better informed of students' issues, driving improved academic policies	Principal/Director of Studies	Minutes of Quality Monitoring Group record academic policy decisions made in the light of reports from personal tutors on both academic and pastoral issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise the process of appraising and developing staff (paragraph 2.11) 	<p>See under Good practice: 'financial and mentoring support for staff undertaking staff development'</p> <p>See under Advisable section: 'implement the teaching observation system consistently'</p>	<p>See under Good practice: 'financial and mentoring support for staff undertaking staff development'</p> <p>See under Advisable section: 'implement the teaching observation system consistently'</p>	<p>See under Good practice: 'financial and mentoring support for staff undertaking staff development'</p> <p>See under Advisable section: 'implement the teaching observation system consistently'</p>	See	Previous	Columns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information 	Undertake review of how online programme materials are managed	By 23 January 2013	Facilitator/ Director of Operations	Public information and online programme material available to students accurate, up to	Principal	Quality Monitoring Group minutes record approval of updated public information policy, improved

published online (paragraph 3.2).	Devise arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information available to students through the emerging virtual learning environment	By end of spring term (week beginning 18 April)	Programme leaders and Director of Operations	date and complete Director of Operations clear about requirements for public information policy for a larger college delivering university programmes	Principal	management of online programme materials and accuracy and completeness of information available to students through the virtual learning environment
	Develop our public information policy in the light of our proposed growth	By end of academic year 2013 (week beginning 3 June)	Facilitator/ Direction of Operations		Principal	Student evaluation forms record improved satisfaction with improved materials and information available to students online
	Ensure that all information is accessible for students with disabilities (for example, sight or hearing impaired)	By 31 January 2013	Director of Operations			

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:

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.

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