QAA

South London College

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

November 2012

Key findings about South London 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; the Association of Business Practitioners; the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; the Australian Institute of Business; BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT; City & Guilds; and the Institute of Leadership & 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.

Good practice

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

- the highly effective mechanism for monitoring progress against the College's Quality Improvement Plan (paragraph 1.6)
- the support offered to student representatives (paragraph 2.7)
- the comprehensive package of support for students prior to the commencement of their studies (paragraphs 2.9 and 3.2)
- College support for a wide range of extra-curricular activities (paragraph 2.17)
- the provision of regular staff and student newsletters (paragraph 3.4).

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:

- introduce student representation at programme team meetings (paragraph 1.3).

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

- take steps to provide students with access to external examiner reports (paragraph 1.8)
- continue to develop its processes for the recording of all feedback given to students following assessment (paragraph 2.11).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at South London College (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives; the Association of Business Practitioners; the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; the Australian Institute of Business; BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT; City & Guilds; and the Institute of Leadership & Management. The review was carried out by Dr Philip Davies, Ms Daphne Rowlands, Ms Ruth Stoker (reviewers), and Mr Peter Clarke (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 the College's self-evaluation, its strategic plan, student and staff handbooks, Accreditation Service for International Colleges and awarding organisation accreditation certificates, minutes of key committees, the student written submission, external verification records, meetings with staff and students.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure/UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- the awarding organisations' requirements
- the Accreditation Service for International Colleges
- the Higher Education Academy.

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

South London College (the College) is an independent, international college for further and higher education, located in south-east London. It was founded in 2006 to widen access to further and higher education for international students. The College's mission is to deliver academic and educational excellence, enabling students to fulfil their potential and realising opportunities through partnership and innovation. It has some 1,060 students, of whom 906 are on higher education programmes, and 55 academic and 22 administrative staff, being 44 full-time equivalent staff. It is organised into two academic faculties.

Since the takeover of another college in January 2012, the College has operated from a single building in the centre of Woolwich. This building is a former office block, converted to provide a range of general teaching accommodation and some specialist facilities. The College is accredited by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges and is a UK Border Agency Highly Trusted Sponsor.

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

Association of Business Executives (ABE)
- Business Management - levels 4-7 (584)
- Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management - levels 4-6 (147)

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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.

Australian Institute of Business (AIB)
- Bachelor of Business Administration (65)
- Master of Business Administration (9)

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT (BCS)
- Higher Education Qualifications in IT - levels 4-5 (11)

Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM)
- Diploma in Leadership and Management - level 4 (7)

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- Professional Examinations (64)

City & Guilds
- Higher Professional Diploma in Health and Well-being (12)

Association of Business Practitioners (ABP)
- Extended Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership and Management in the Health and Social Care Sector (7).

The provider's stated responsibilities

In all cases, the College is responsible for the admission, induction and academic support of students. It is also responsible for ensuring an appropriate provision of staff and physical resources and for the development of staff. For programmes of the ABP, City & Guilds and ILM, the College is responsible for the initial marking of assessments and for providing feedback to students, and has some responsibility for setting assessments and initial moderation. In other cases, the awarding organisation is responsible for all aspects of summative assessment. Where possible, the College collects achievement data for its students but because of the regulations of some awarding organisations, it is not possible for the College to gather this data for all of its students.

Recent developments

The College's most recent developments include institutional validation by Leeds Metropolitan University, with approval to offer degree level programmes. The College has been approved for the delivery of three franchised programmes: BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance, BA (Hons) Business and Management and BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems. The first intake of students is planned for January 2013. The College has reviewed its current portfolio of programmes and, from August 2012, the following programmes are no longer offered to new students:

- ABE Graduate Diploma in Business Management
- ABE Graduate Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management
- AIB Bachelor of Business Administration (all pathways)
- AIB Master of Business Administration (Financial Management pathway)
- ABP Extended Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership and Management in the Health and Social Care Sector
- ILM Diploma in Leadership and Management.

Current students enrolled on the above programmes are not affected.

In October 2011, the College established an English language department to provide English language courses to UK, EU and international students. This has also allowed the College to offer free English language support sessions to international students enrolled on other programmes.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A submission consisting of a written report and a series of recorded interviews was provided. The written submission was organised by a student member of the executive team of the Student Representative Council. A focus group of 19 students from across the provision was formed and the student submission was developed from the responses within this group to a questionnaire. The recorded responses were in the form of interviews with selected students by the same student representative. Meetings were held with representative groups of students at the preparatory meeting and during the visit. Both the submission and the meetings provided valuable inputs into the review.

Detailed findings about South London College

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   Academic standards are managed effectively. The College has a clear strategic plan which sets out its aims for the organisation in the context of agreements with its awarding organisations. Programme specifications are mostly provided by the awarding organisations, with the College providing summary information about each programme contextualised to the College and containing information about modules, delivery and assessment methods. A clear delineation of responsibilities for each programme is set out in checklists that identify accountability for setting and marking assignments and monitoring programme standards. Staff are made aware of these responsibilities through the induction process that contains both a generic and programme level induction. Faculty heads have regular meetings with teaching staff, including standardisation meetings, which ensure programme standards are appropriate.

1.2   The College's governance arrangements provide the infrastructure for the effective management of academic standards. The reporting structure for committees is clearly identified within an organogram, and terms of reference define the scope of each committee and frequency of meetings. An organisation chart sets out the mechanisms for accountability and communications throughout the College. A Quality Director has recently been appointed with the remit of assisting the strategic management of higher education within the College. A recently developed Quality Improvement Plan, which is regularly monitored, includes arrangements to ensure standards are maintained.

1.3   Programme teams meet at least once per term to discuss the delivery and key elements of programmes. Annual monitoring of programmes helps to ensure standards are maintained. Resulting reports have action plans attached, which identify clearly the improvements to be made and assign responsibilities for actions, with timescales. While student representatives sit on the Academic Committee, students are not represented at programme team meetings, nor do they have opportunities to see minutes of those meetings. As a result, the College is missing an opportunity to benefit from direct student input to the management of programmes. The team considers it advisable for the College to introduce student representation at programme team meetings.

1.4   There is appropriate oversight of academic standards. Overall responsibility for upholding academic standards rests with the Senior Management Team, with responsibility delegated to the Academic Committee. The Senior Management Team, comprising the Principal, Quality Director, Finance and Premises Manager, Student Services Coordinator and faculty directors, meets fortnightly to oversee the operation of the College. The Academic Committee is chaired by the Quality Director and comprises course leaders, faculty directors and student representatives. It has oversight and responsibility for upholding the academic standards of the awarding organisations. It receives reports of relevant programme team meetings and reviews annual monitoring procedures. Day-to-day contact with the awarding organisations is the responsibility of individual programme leaders, who then report to the Faculty Director and Academic Committee.

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

1.5   Responsibility for the design of programmes remains with the awarding organisations. Drawing upon external reference points, the College defines appropriate level descriptors. Teaching staff are made aware of these during induction and they are available on the College's intranet. Schemes of work and teaching plans take into account the awarding organisations' intended learning outcomes, as do most assignment briefs. Assignments that are designed within the College, for example on the Higher Professional Diploma in Health and Well-being, take into account external reference points that help ensure students are able to achieve at the appropriate level. Many staff teach at other institutions and bring added value to their teaching, including the experience and knowledge of subject benchmark statements. The College is in the process of raising awareness among staff of the use of benchmarks across all its programmes. The Quality Director provides a training session for new staff covering external reference points. Existing staff are made aware of reference points through staff development and training programmes. A document summarising external reference points is available for all staff during training and on the intranet.

1.6   The Quality Improvement Plan maps College policies to relevant external reference points, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and awarding organisations. The plan utilises a traffic light system of monitoring, with regular review milestones highlighted to ensure currency. This provides a highly effective mechanism for monitoring progress against the plan and is good practice. The Quality Improvement Plan is submitted to the Academic Committee for approval and to the Senior Management Team for ratification.

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

1.7   External moderation and verification are used to good effect. The College has a shared responsibility for the assessment of some programmes and the first marking of assignments for AIB and ABE programmes. For other programmes, the College acts as a tuition provider, preparing students for externally assessed examinations. The guidelines for assessment and verification are outlined in the College's Quality Assurance Manual, given to staff during induction. All assessment and verification actions are undertaken according to the awarding organisation requirements. There are guidelines specific to ABP and ILM programmes, which define the role of the internal assessor and internal verifier, as well as describing the process of external moderation. Checklists for each qualification define the responsibility for assessment clearly, including the setting, marking and moderation of assignments. If required by the awarding organisation, each programme has an internal verifier who meets teaching staff on a regular basis and ensures the standardisation of assessment and provides a forum for sharing good practice. Internal verifiers also observe assessors giving oral feedback to students. Assignment briefs are internally verified before distribution to ensure the level of assignment is appropriate.

1.8   In the case of programmes which have external verifiers or examiners, there are appropriate processes for the consideration of their reports. These are received by programme leaders and considered at programme team meetings. Resulting action plans are monitored by the Academic Committee to ensure the completion of actions. Minutes of programme meetings show that external verification visits are discussed and reported to the Academic Committee and finally to Senior Management Team meetings. External verifiers are appointed by the awarding organisation; their reports inform the annual monitoring of programmes and are used to enhance quality. While students are represented on the

Academic Committee, there is a lack of transparency in the system, as students do not see examiners' reports. The team considers it desirable that the College takes steps to provide students with access to external examiner reports.

1.9   The College evaluates the effectiveness of its own structure for managing standards by a sound system of monitoring through its committee system and by taking appropriate and timely action to address points raised in external examiner reports. It would enable the College to monitor achievement of standards more effectively if better information on results was available from some of the awarding institutions, which do not routinely make such information available to providers.

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.

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The College fulfils its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities through the same effective processes as outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4. It is responsible for teaching and learning across all its programmes, while assessment arrangements vary. Staff understand their responsibilities and a College overview is maintained through the Academic Committee. Student handbooks and programme information are helpful and clear in setting out the assessment arrangements for each award. There are guidelines for assessment, including a flow chart on the stages of assessment, to steer staff through the relevant assessment process.

2.2   The College's comprehensive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is used to drive improvement across all sectors of College activity. The strategy was introduced in January 2012, and staff have a good understanding of how it is being used effectively to enhance aspects of teaching and learning, in particular through the development of teaching observation systems. The Academic Committee is responsible for monitoring progress against the objectives set out in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy through the Quality Improvement Plan. This sets realistic timescales for enhancement activity.

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

2.3   The College is developing its use of the Quality Code and embedding it into policy documents, such as the Admissions Policy, and into the Quality Improvement Plan, which cross-references each target to a chapter of the Quality Code. Higher Education Academy guidance is incorporated in the Teaching Observation Policy. There is a briefing document for staff, explaining the relevance of external reference points, which is used in staff training sessions and also in staff induction. Staff have a good understanding of external reference points and have used them to enhance teaching and learning, for example through the use of the Qualifications and Credit Framework in designing appropriate assessment activities.

2.4   From January 2013, the College intends to offer programmes validated by Leeds Metropolitan University under a recently negotiated agreement, and it has demonstrated a good understanding of QAA guidance on programme approval processes.

2.5   The Overseas Student Guide is a comprehensive and helpful document, which is highly valued by students new to the UK, and it has drawn on external guidance, including the QAA publication: *International students studying in the UK - Guidance for UK higher education providers*. It provides a clear guide on teaching and learning within the College, assessment, and practical aspects of living in the UK.

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

2.6   All teaching staff have relevant academic qualifications and experience, as set out in the Staff Recruitment Policy, and are required to have a teaching qualification or be working towards one. The effective Teaching Observation Policy is informed by policy documents from the Higher Education Academy and consists of a two-tier teaching observation system, with one tier based on peer review, and one in which heads of faculty observe classes. At the end of a teaching observation session, students are invited to take part in discussions to supplement feedback to the tutor. Students feel their opinions are valued and have a positive impact on teaching quality. Staff consider the system to be effective in improving their practice. The Academic Committee receives a summary of teaching observation outcomes, and issues identified form the basis of planned staff development activity.

2.7   Students are widely consulted, through a variety of mechanisms, on all aspects of College provision, and feedback is encouraged by the College. This includes module evaluation, management drop-in surgeries, a Student Representative Council, and membership of some key College committees. Feedback mechanisms are thorough, transparent and valued by the student body. Student representatives are made known to the whole student group through the work of the Student Representative Council and through details posted on noticeboards throughout the College. Members of the Student Representative Council sit on the Staff Student Consultative Committee, which reports directly to the Senior Management Team. The Student Representative Council has its own handbook setting out the roles and responsibilities of student representatives, who also undertake training to support them in their role. The support offered to student representatives is good practice. Students value the Student Representative Council and Staff Student Consultative Committee, and reported that any concerns are taken seriously, and acted on promptly and effectively. As indicated in paragraph 1.3, the College should consider widening student representation at all levels of its operations.

2.8   The College provides a clear response to feedback, setting out its action plan to tackle issues through leaflets and the Student Newsletter, a copy of which is made available to all students. An example of the College's response to student feedback is the development of the library, which students felt was previously under-resourced. Students report that the library has greatly improved.

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

2.9   Students confirm they are well supported by the College. There is a clear Admissions Policy which provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants. The College has produced an Overseas Student Guide for those considering applying to the College. There is a Student Recruitment Manager who liaises with international agents to ensure that applicants are capable of undertaking their programme of study, and this is supported by an agent appointment procedure and Code of Conduct for Agents. Once offered a place at the College, students are sent a Pre-Arrival Guide, which is a helpful document that sets out what to expect on arrival in the UK. There is a comprehensive student induction programme, and new students are given a welcome pack with information about living in the UK, the

College, and their programme of study, and they are allocated a buddy to help them settle in. Students value the comprehensive package of support offered prior to starting their studies. This represents good practice.

2.10   The Student Services Coordinator is responsible for all aspects of pastoral welfare, from induction through to completion of studies. The Student Services Team also includes a Student Welfare Officer who facilitates both the Student Representative Council and Staff Student Consultative Committee. Students report that they find the role very helpful.

2.11   Academic support is provided through the teaching faculties. and students consider staff to be friendly, helpful and easy to contact when needed. Formative assessment is used to support students on all programmes, including externally assessed qualifications. Students confirm that they are happy with feedback, which is given both orally in individual tutorials and in writing, either on scripts or through email. The team saw evidence of some full and informative written feedback, particularly where students had performed poorly. In addition, internal verification records and discussions with staff and students indicated that students receive comprehensive oral feedback on assessed work. However, this is not always fully recorded, so that students and staff lack a formal record of the feedback given. To try and address this, the College has redesigned its assessment feedback form. The team considers it desirable that the College continues to develop its processes for the recording of all feedback given to students.

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

2.12   There is an effective staff recruitment policy. New staff undertake an induction programme which introduces them to College and programme-level policies and procedures. Part-time and full-time tutors are supported financially to engage in appropriate staff training and development events. The College has organised several in-house training events, and it is planned that all teaching staff will undertake basic teacher training by the end of 2013. Staff development is supported by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and training needs are reviewed annually. All training is evaluated by attendees to enable the College to consider its effectiveness. Training materials are made available to all staff through the virtual learning environment.

2.13   To supplement formal training, there are informal 'themed lunch' peer-led sessions where good practice is shared. Staff confirm that these sessions have had a positive impact on teaching practice, and gave as an example a discussion on different learning styles, which staff now incorporate into their teaching. Important information about College provision is shared through a staff weekly bulletin, and staff confirm that they are well supported in enhancing their teaching and learning practice.

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

2.14   The library provides appropriate support for the programmes, including an increasing range of e-books and online journals, though some students would welcome the provision of a wider range of print-based resources. Students welcome the recent extension of library opening hours, which reflect student needs and circumstances. Core textbooks are also provided by the College and these are made available to students from the first day of the semester.

2.15   Information technology facilities are well matched to needs and include a drop-in room with 70 personal computers for student use. Hardware and software needs are identified in meetings between relevant teaching staff and programme leaders. A wireless network connection is provided throughout the College, which enables the students to access the internet and College facilities on their own laptops and mobile phones.

2.16   The College also provides a virtual learning environment, which students value as a useful repository of books, journals, programme lecture notes and other materials. It is also used for the distribution of minutes and policies, programme and assessment materials, reading lists, rules and regulations and general College information, as well as providing discussion forums and facilities to make online payments, borrow library books and e-books, and submit assignments. Teaching staff use the virtual learning environment effectively to support their teaching, and there are guidelines setting out minimum expectations of what staff are required to upload. The College plans to expand the facility to support the provision of Leeds Metropolitan University programmes. Staff and students value the virtual learning environment and its contribution to enhancing the students' learning experience.

2.17   The College provides a wide range of curriculum-enhancing activities that are highly valued by the students. It has provided a fund of £5,000 to support recreational activities and the students have a direct say in how this is spent in their interests. Students feel that the provision of activities, including visits, debates, social events and a European tour, have had a valuable impact on their learning opportunities and extended the scope of a full higher education learning experience. The College is developing further recreational facilities. The College's support of a wide range of extra-curricular activities is good practice.

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.

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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 uses an effective range of media for communicating with stakeholders, including its website, virtual learning environment, hard copy and electronic prospectus, newsletters and promotional materials. It also makes extensive use of social media, email and SMS texting to inform students.

3.2   The College provides accurate and comprehensive information for prospective students, primarily through its website, which contains detailed information about the College's programmes, mission and facilities; information on applications and visas for overseas students; and general information on living in London. Links are provided to awarding organisation websites, where additional information on programmes is available. The website is easy to navigate and the information clearly stated. The College ensures that all information used by its agents overseas is originated and checked by the College. Students commented favourably on the accuracy, breadth and usefulness of the information provided before their enrolment.

3.3   Students are provided with a range of helpful printed information during induction. This includes a programme handbook, as well as a general student handbook, an induction pack, and programme-specific information, some of which is provided by the awarding

organisations. Module information is introduced at the start of each module and students confirm that lecturers take care to ensure that they understand the information presented. The College produces its own detailed programme specifications to enhance the information provided by the awarding organisations.

3.4   The College has effective mechanisms for communicating written information to its staff and students. All staff are provided with a handbook and a quality assurance manual, which is aligned to the Quality Code. The quality manual, issued to all new staff at induction, includes policies and procedures for programme delivery and administration. Noticeboards and a prominent video screen in reception are used to display information for students and staff. These are well maintained and provide current information, clearly including details of student representatives, local facilities, and other sources of study material and support freely available on the campus. The College produces a weekly staff newsletter and a quarterly student newsletter. These are highly effective in keeping staff and students fully informed of College events. The student newsletter includes a 'You Said, We Did' section, which summarises the College's responses to issues raised by students. The provision of regular staff and student newsletters is good practice.

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

3.5   The College has effective mechanisms for checking its online information. The content of the website is prepared by academic staff, checked by the faculty director and then forwarded to the student recruitment manager who liaises with staff to ensure information is up to date and correct. Changes to website information are approved by the Principal or Managing Director before being implemented and there is a clear audit trail of changes made. The Quality Director carries out a monthly review of web information, which is reported to the student recruitment manager.

3.6   The College Secretary manages paper-based information and there is an effective process for tracking and approving all policies, procedures, guides and handbooks. This includes a well designed version control method and the identification of a single point of contact for making all changes. Programme handbooks are originated by the programme leader and signed off as correct by the Faculty Head and then passed to the College Secretary, who provides a version number and is solely authorised to log the document onto the system. The College Secretary then initiates a biannual review of documentation, implementing any revisions. Staff are notified of changes via email and the most recent versions are available 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 plan[3]

South London 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:						
• the highly effective mechanism for monitoring progress against the College's Quality Improvement Plan (paragraph 1.6)	Review the Quality Improvement Plan on an annual basis, with mapping against the Quality Code	April 2013 (and ongoing)	Director of Quality	Quality improvement tasks completed on time and/or identify new/ revised targets	Academic Committee	Quality Improvement Plan; Academic Committee minutes
• the support offered to student representatives (paragraph 2.7)	Formalise the yearly programme of training events for student representatives	April 2013 (Planner)	Student Welfare Officer	All planned training events delivered according to schedule Positive feedback from student representatives	Staff Student Consultative Committee	Staff Student Consultative Committee minutes Training evaluation forms
	Revise the Student Representative Council Handbook to include student contributions	May 2013	Student Welfare Officer	Approval and publication of revised handbook	Staff Student Consultative Committee	Staff Student Consultative Committee minutes

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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.

	Establish a Student Representative Council forum on the virtual learning environment	September 2013	Student Welfare Officer and Student Representative Council	Discussion threads are used/ information is made available	Staff Student Consultative Committee	Staff Student Consultative Committee minutes
• the comprehensive package of support for students prior to the commencement of their studies (paragraphs 2.9 and 3.2)	Develop the range and depth of learning materials available to further support prospective students	September 2013	Student Services Coordinator	Materials are produced and accessible	Administrative Committee	Administrative Committee minutes Student induction feedback survey
• College support for a wide range of extra-curricular activities (paragraph 2.17)	Formalise and extend the planned programme of events in conjunction with the Student Representative Council	April 2013 (Planner)	Student Welfare Officer	Events are identified and take place	Senior Management Team	Staff Student Consultative Committee minutes Student feedback
• the provision of regular staff and student newsletters (paragraph 3.4).	Include more contributions from academic and administrative staff in the staff bulletin	March 2013	College Secretary	Regular contributions included	Principal	Bulletins Staff feedback
	Include more contributions from students in the student newsletter	March 2013	College Secretary	Regular contributions included	Principal	Newsletters Student feedback
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:						

• introduce student representation at programme team meetings (paragraph 1.3).	Liaise with the Student Representative Council to identify student representatives for each programme	February 2013	Student Welfare Officer/ Course Leaders	Student representatives attend programme team meetings Student views considered in decision making processes at programme level	Academic Committee	Minutes of programme team meetings
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:						
• take steps to provide students with access to external examiner reports (paragraph 1.8)	Publish Annual Monitoring Reports on the virtual learning environment	June 2013 (publish 2012 reports)	Course leaders	All available reports accessible to students through the virtual learning environment within one month of publication	Programme team meetings Academic Committee	Programme team meetings minutes Academic Committee minutes
• continue to develop its processes for the recording of all feedback given to students following assessment (paragraph 2.11).	Develop a tracker to record meetings with students Update written guidelines for providing feedback to students	February 2013 February 2013	Academic staff Director of Quality	Accurate meeting record maintained Guidelines complied with by all staff	Academic Committee Academic Committee	Audit of feedback practice

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 one to eight, with levels four 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.