London College of International Business Studies

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

November 2012

Key findings about London College of International Business Studies

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 Edexcel.

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

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

Good practice

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

- the range, depth and transparency of the College's recent self-reflective critical internal and external reviews (paragraph 1.1).

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:

- produce annual monitoring reports for each higher education programme (paragraph 1.3)
- further clarify, fully implement and monitor planned quality assurance processes, roles and responsibilities, as suggested in current documentation (paragraph 1.4)
- enhance academic staff understanding and use of external reference points, especially with regard to assessment, feedback and staff development (paragraph 2.4)
- implement its plans for internal verification and moderation as soon as possible (paragraph 2.6)
- establish a formal tutorial system (paragraph 2.9)
- provide more comprehensive information about its higher education programmes for potential and current students (paragraph 3.4).

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

- develop a network of alumni, employers and other external stakeholders to support the Advisory Board (paragraph 1.6)
- establish a clear academic higher education calendar to consider and respond to external examiners' reports in a timely manner (paragraph 1.7)
- establish and implement a consistent policy concerning the nature and quality of feedback provided to students (paragraph 2.7)
- implement the peer observation policy and introduce formal observation by line managers (paragraph 2.11)

- implement proposals to develop a virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.5)
- implement the planned formal processes for the management and oversight of public information (paragraph 3.7)
- develop a more systematic process for obtaining stakeholder feedback on its public information (paragraph 3.8).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Review for Educational Oversight[1] (REO) conducted by QAA at London College of International Business Studies (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Edexcel. The review was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite, Mr Paul Monroe, Dr Ana-Maria Pascal (reviewers), and Dr Chris Amodio (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 awarding organisation's agreements, documentation concerning the recent validation of the Certificate in Education programme by the University of Salford, reports of external reviews, quality assurance documents, policies, handbooks and minutes of meetings supplied by the provider, meetings with staff, and representatives of current and future awarding organisations and students.

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

- the National Qualifications Framework
- external verification
- subject benchmark statements
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- the awarding organisations's requirements and regulations.

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

London College of International Business Studies (the College) was established in 1994 as an independent business and management college. Its governing body is a Board of Directors based in the USA, working closely with a London-based Principal and Board Representative. Day-to-day academic management of the College is undertaken by the Principal and a recently appointed Director of Studies. They work with the Board Representative. A new chief executive officer has been recently appointed, who acts as a link between the Board of Directors and senior College management through the Principal. Members of the Board visit the College every quarter to discuss strategic and operational matters, the outcomes of which are turned into College activity. The College's mission is to . 'foster internationalism and professionalism in business through the provision of applied academic programmes that embody a spirit of international understanding and business cooperation. The primary ambition of [the College] is to provide a stimulating and exciting multicultural learning environment in which students aspire to become global citizens capable of contributing effectively and responsibly to society.'

Located in an attractive building in Holborn, Central London, the College is well positioned for students to engage with the commercial and cultural opportunities offered in the surrounding area. In addition to the higher education programmes of study listed below, the College offers a range of self-validated Level 3 Diploma and certificates. The 12 and 15-month diploma programmes were, until recently, recognised by London Metropolitan

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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.

University for entry into level 5 of its relevant degree courses. Currently, 76 students are enrolled at the College studying for a range of certificates and diplomas. Of these, 10 are following full-time programmes within the higher education provision; four are studying for the Extended Diploma. The College currently has the UK Border Agency's highly trusted Tier 4 sponsor status.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation. The student numbers enrolled on each course are given in brackets:

Edexcel
- HNC Business (1)
- HND Business (5)
- Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (4)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College currently works with one awarding organisation which approves its higher education programmes. It is an approved centre to offer Edexcel's BTEC qualifications. The College is accredited by the British Accreditation Council. The awarding organisation determines the intended learning outcomes, indicative content and assessment guidelines for each programme. In addition, the College designs learning materials and manages the delivery of the programmes. It is responsible for managing the quality of its provision, as laid down in the regulations and ordinances of its awarding organisation.

Recent developments

Recent changes in the educational environment led to a strategic review of the College's provision, resulting in the Board of Directors' decision to promote its business and academic development. Following this strategic review, the Board of Directors decided to develop the College's higher education provision at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as continuing to offer its certificate and diploma programmes. To this end, in May 2012, the College negotiated a progression agreement with the University of Derby offering student progression from its Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership onto the University's MBA programme, although students still have to undertake the University's selection procedure. More recently, a Certificate of Higher Education programme is in the process of validation by the University of Salford, which will allow students guaranteed progression to its appropriate level 5 programmes. It is intended that this programme will commence in September 2013. The College ultimately hopes to be able to offer further accredited undergraduate and postgraduate 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. It was put together by the students on the Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership programme, following a meeting of the Course Committee. The Programme Manager helped with its construction. Students on the programme also completed a questionnaire. In addition, the team had the opportunity to meet six students from the higher education provision, in addition to two students following level 3 programmes.

Detailed findings about London College of International Business Studies

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College is aware of its responsibilities for the management of academic standards. There are emerging management systems and reporting arrangements are in place. A self-evaluative critical review has been undertaken, with input from external consultants, into the future direction of the College and the shape of its future higher education curriculum. This has made an effective contribution to the development of new policies and procedures. It is not yet clear how successful these will be in practice, but the development process has been clear and coherent and is understood by staff. The team considers that the range, depth and transparency of the College's recent self-reflective critical internal and external reviews constitute an area of good practice.

1.2 Course management is effective. Academic staff report to the Director of Studies, who reports to the Principal, who, in turn, reports to the Board of Governors. These arrangements are underpinned by a committee structure that comprises staff/student forums and course committee meetings, all of which report to the Academic Board, and ultimately to the Board of Governors.

1.3 The College's Strategic Business Plan: August 2011 clearly sets out its future direction in terms of coherent key goals, outcomes and changes. The plan states where the College is now, where it would like to be and how it plans to get there. The proposed arrangements are clear and sensible, but development is still at an early stage. As yet, no higher education-specific annual monitoring reports have been produced, although the College confirmed that it is their intention. There is, however, an effective system for non-higher education programmes, which, when replicated as planned for individual higher education programmes, should enhance the management of academic standards. It is advisable for the College to produce annual monitoring reports for each higher education programme.

1.4 Three committees are used to support the management of academic standards. These are: the Academic Board, the Advisory Board and the Staff/Student Forum. The Academic Board comprises senior management, programme managers and academic staff, and is chaired by the Principal. It has oversight of all administrative, academic and quality issues associated with the College. The Advisory Board has clear terms of reference and is intended to comprise external academics, employer representatives and other external stakeholders. However, the Board has yet to meet. The intended purpose of the Board is to help the College to develop as a higher education institution and to determine its overall direction and the shape of the future curriculum. The Staff/Student Forum comprises student representatives and academic staff. Its purpose is to receive critical feedback from students and use that feedback to improve the quality of the programmes and the provision made for the students. The quality assurance committee structure is clear and coherent, but is not yet fully developed. It is advisable for the College to further clarify, fully implement and monitor planned quality assurance processes, roles and responsibilities as suggested in current documentation.

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

1.5 The College is aware of the purpose and uses of the Academic Infrastructure and intends to align all higher education provision with current expectations and, in particular, reflect the requirements of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards* (the *Code of practice*). There is some evidence of this having happened through the Academic Board, but nothing has been finalised and the level of staff understanding is, at present, variable.

1.6 The Advisory Board will, if developed as intended, provide a useful external reference point. At present, the College makes little use of additional external reference points to underpin academic standards. There is no formal contact with employers or other external stakeholders. The Edexcel programmes that comprise the entirety of the current higher education provision make use of a wide range of external reference points, such as National Occupational Standards and the endorsement of professional bodies and Sector Skills Councils. This provides a high level of externality, but other programmes that are not accredited by Edexcel are currently under consideration. The team regards this to be an opportune time for the College to consult widely on its current and future higher education provision. It is desirable for the College to develop a network of alumni, employers and other external stakeholders to support the Advisory Board.

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

1.7 There are emerging procedures for managing the reports of external examiners. However, no such reports have yet been received for the higher education programmes currently on offer, as the first students commenced these Edexcel programmes in May 2012. The College is aware of the importance of addressing the action points and recommendations made by external examiners, and of making formal responses to external examiner reports. It is desirable for the College to establish a clear academic higher education calendar to consider and respond to external examiners' reports in a timely manner.

1.8 The College's collection and use of student opinion to help assure academic standards and quality are effective. The College is well informed about student views and is able to take timely action on issues as and when appropriate. Students confirm that they are kept informed of the College's response to the matters they raise and are able to cite examples of action taken, especially in terms of the College environment.

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

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's policies and processes for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are those described in paragraphs 1.1-1.4 for academic standards. These arrangements have the potential to be effective in managing and supporting the quality of learning opportunities for the College's higher education provision.

2.2   Much of the management of learning opportunities is done through informal processes and collegial dialogue. As a consequence, formal articulation, recording and documentation of discussions, reviews and decision making takes place in a piecemeal manner. The College recognises the need to move towards a more formal and holistic approach which integrates policies and practices. The team agrees with this approach.

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

2.3   The College has made some efforts to engage with the Academic Infrastructure in its formulation and implementation of strategies to manage and enhance learning opportunities, and academic staff are aware of its importance. Indirect references are made to subject benchmark statements through awarding organisation specifications, and some academic staff have direct experience of external review processes.

2.4   Recent reviews have led to the identification of a number of weaknesses in relation to student feedback, assessments, and staff development. These have subsequently resulted in the development of a number of strategies and action plans, which are in the process of being implemented. It is apparent from review of documentation and discussions with staff that the Advisory Board and the awarding organisations will become important external reference points in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities. In particular, this will promote knowledge and understanding of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*, and of intended staff development and career opportunities. However, it is advisable that further actions are taken to enhance academic staff understanding and use of external reference points, especially with regard to assessment, feedback, and staff development.

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

2.5   The College has recently drafted a teaching, learning and development strategy as well as a quality assurance and enhancement handbook. In addition, it is planning to set up an associated committee for purposes of implementing the strategy, which will operate from January 2013. The strategy is student-centred and it reflects the College's intention to integrate its policies and practices in an institution-based approach. The quality assurance and enhancement handbook includes policies and procedures regarding the whole learning cycle, from admission, through course delivery, and on to completion. The team was impressed by the positive attitude of students and their overall satisfaction regarding the quality of their teaching and learning experience, but encourages the College to prioritise the implementation of its strategy and associated policies.

2.6   The College has no formal assessment policy in place yet. Instead, there are two assessment systems - one for the level 3 courses, the other for the higher level Edexcel provision. There is evidence of marking criteria being mapped against learning outcomes. However, there is no evidence of any internal verification or moderation as yet, although the College has established suitable processes. It is advisable for the College to implement its plans for internal verification and moderation as soon as possible.

2.7   Students receive feedback on their assignments, but this varies in terms of nature and extent across modules and courses. While it is very detailed and helpful in some cases, there are also areas where it is less effective. It is part of the College's teaching, learning and development strategy to integrate policies and practices across its provision. It is desirable for the College to establish and implement a consistent policy concerning the nature and quality of feedback provided to students.

2.8   The College currently offers a one-day orientation for all new students. It also provides a full-week induction for level 7 students and is planning to expand this across the higher education provision from January 2013. Currently, both the induction and the nature of materials that students receive are variable, but the College has identified good practices and is in the process of integrating and applying them consistently across the entire provision.

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

2.9   Students who met the team confirmed that they have easy access to tutors and administrative staff, and that help and advice on academic, personal, financial and visa matters are available when needed. English language support is available, and an optional Study Skills development module is provided for higher education students. Although students are generally positive about the level of support provided, there is currently no formal tutorial system in place. To ensure consistency and provision of a threshold level of support, especially with the anticipated rise in student numbers, it is advisable for the College to establish a formal tutorial system.

2.10   Processes are established for students to express their views on the quality and nature of learning opportunities provided. There is evidence that students' concerns and suggestions have generally been addressed, albeit with certain delays, and the College is aware of the need to continue developing this area, and it has plans to include students in future course reviews. However, all students and staff consider that internal communication could be improved.

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

2.11   The College's plans for formal and continual staff development are currently at an early stage of implementation. The College has various arrangements in place with current and intended awarding organisations for provision of staff training and development, and there is evidence that key staff have engaged with these. Policies have been established for the formal and routine monitoring of teaching and learning, including peer observation. There is currently no observation undertaken by line managers. Discussion with the management team and academic staff confirmed that introduction of such processes would be welcomed as a means to ensure personal and professional enhancement. The team regards it desirable for the College to implement the peer observation policy and to consider introducing formal observation by line managers.

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   Provision of appropriate learning resources has been problematic, particularly in terms of IT provision and quality of teaching and social accommodation. A need to improve the quality of learning resources has been identified and accepted by College management, funding confirmed and improvements made. Borrowing rights have been arranged with a local higher education institution, and IT systems are in the process of being updated. In addition, there have been recent appointments of staff at management, technical and administrative levels, including a full-time IT manager.

2.13   Currently, there is no virtual learning environment available, but the College has clear plans and earmarked funds to introduce one within six months. This is envisaged both

as a depository of information and as an active support for all teaching and learning activities.

> 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 disseminates public information primarily through its prospectus and website, and internally it utilises handbooks and course materials to communicate with students. The professionally presented prospectus covers general entry requirements, preparation for higher education, and individual students' profiles, and supplementary pages provide course descriptions.

3.2   The College website is an attractive source of public information for prospective students, providing access to a range of information, through the clearly labelled tabs. This includes the courses available and admission requirements, the College approach to learning, and student services and support. There is also a link to commence electronic enrolment. Students confirmed the ease of obtaining information, and the helpfulness of admissions staff. The College has identified that the website needs to be enhanced to provide more information on courses and staffing, and a marketing group will address this.

3.3   The College is responsible for the promotion and advertising of courses, and for producing programme specifications for courses accredited by Edexcel. For the University of Salford's Certificate in Higher Education programme (currently subject to validation), the College will utilise the programme and module specifications provided by the University, and responsibilities for promotion will be finalised when approval is granted.

3.4   The College has not provided comprehensive written information about its courses to current students. Students have expressed some confusion over the content of the diploma and HNC/D courses, and some had not received a student handbook and clarity on term dates at the start of their course. The students were, however, satisfied with the information provided about individual modules. The College has recently updated the student handbook, which includes information on student services, regulations, and local library facilities. It has identified a need to create dedicated handbooks for individual courses and module handbooks to a specified format. Currently, essential information is communicated to students through a range of formal and informal routes, but as the provision develops, it is advisable for the College to provide more comprehensive information about its higher education courses for potential and current students.

3.5   There is currently no virtual learning environment to aid access to course information and other learning resources. The College plans to develop a system with staff and student portals and an intranet for use from September 2013. This is a timely development, which will significantly improve access to course information and enhance the teaching and learning environment. It is to be desirable for the College to implement proposals to develop a virtual learning environment.

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

3.6   The College has processes in place for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information for which it is responsible. The Principal and the Chief Operations Officer share primary responsibility for the accuracy of publications, working in consultation with relevant staff, including the Director of Studies, Admissions Officer, the Academic Registrar, and teaching staff.

3.7   The approval process involves several College staff, with the Principal holding responsibility for the final authorisation of academic information. The Chief Operations Officer has an overarching role in managing published information, and makes any changes to the website after the content has been agreed by relevant parties. The Director of Studies is responsible for reviewing the contents of the generic student handbook. Teaching staff prepare module specifications to an agreed template, but there is no formal process for peer review of the content and accuracy of module handbooks and course materials. In the light of its plans for growth and recruitment of new staff, the College has identified a need for a formal written policy to guide staff on ensuring accuracy and quality of information, together with a process for the continuous monitoring of public information. Although in general the current arrangements operate appropriately, it is desirable for the College to implement the planned formal processes for the management and oversight of public information.

3.8   Student feedback on the information provided pre-enrolment, on induction, and in printed material is obtained at a general level through student questionnaires. However, the College does not formally monitor students' views on the public information it provides. Students who met the team were not aware of the proposed development of a virtual learning environment, and the College had not considered involving students in the design of the system. To ensure that views of students and other interested parties are taken into account, it is desirable for the College to develop a more systematic process for obtaining stakeholder feedback on its public information.

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]

London College of International Business Studies 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 area of **good practice** that is worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the range, depth and transparency of the College's recent self-reflective critical internal and external reviews (paragraph 1.1).	Set up an advisory body with terms of reference and membership Review the Advisory Body membership and activity annually	April 2013 and then quarterly June 2014 and then annually	Senior Management Group Registrar and Senior Management Group	Successful implementation of an advisory body with wide-ranging membership including employers, professionals and senior academic staff with activities identified	Board of Governors	Minutes of the Advisory Body and Board of Governors
	Set up a review group including external membership, to provide a review of practices and variety of reports of engagement with quality assurance and enhancement	April 2013	Senior Management Group	Review group constituted, fulfilling briefs and providing comprehensive and self-reflective reports for the committees to consider	Board of Governors	Board of Governors' 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 organisation.

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:						
• produce annual monitoring reports for each higher education programme (paragraph 1.3)	Implement a timetabled approach to the delivery of annual monitoring reports for each programme of study	November 2013	Senior Management Group and programme leaders	The production of annual monitoring reports highlighting appropriate description, analysis and interpretation for action plans to be drawn up ensuring the academic health of the programmes	Academic Board and external accreditation organisations/ bodies Programme committees Examination boards	Review group consideration of completed annual monitoring reports Minutes of the Academic Board Feedback from awarding organisations/ external providers
	After consultation, develop an electronic programme management system to support annual monitoring processes	January 2013	Registrar	Operational electronic programme management system		
• further clarify, fully implement and monitor planned quality assurance processes, roles and responsibilities, as suggested in current documentation	Introduce, implement and monitor policies and procedures contained in the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook	September 2013	Senior Management Group Review Group	Successful implementation and embedding of new policies and procedures	Academic Board Teaching, Learning and Development Group	Review Group report Academic Board minutes

(paragraph 1.4)	Provide staff development plans to introduce staff to all aspects of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook	March 2013	Senior Management Group	Review Group reports show monitoring of action points, reporting and tracking these until completion Staff development plan supports implementation of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook procedures	Academic Board	Feedback from staff development activity
• enhance academic staff understanding and use of external reference points, especially with regard to assessment, feedback and staff development (paragraph 2.4)	Introduce regular staff development activity to cover the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), and enhancement of academic standards in higher education Map the Quality Code to the College's policies and procedures to provide a gap analysis	March 2013 February 2014	Senior Management Group Senior Management Group	Clear linkages to the Quality Code shown in programme and module development practices; module specifications and assessment practices implementing appropriately - benchmarks, levels, learning outcomes and demonstrating assessment practices in accord with the	Academic Board Teaching, Learning and Development Group Academic Board	Review Group report Academic Board minutes

				the Quality Code		
	Appoint external verifiers/examiners	April 2013	Senior Management Group	Successful engagement reported by external examiners and examination/ verification boards with no major issues reported linked to the Quality Code	Academic Board Examination boards	Review Group report Minutes of the examination boards
	Review job descriptions, induct and mentor new staff to ensure awareness of the Quality Code	April 2013	Senior Management Group			
				Successful implementation of updated job descriptions		
• implement its plans for internal verification and moderation as soon as possible (paragraph 2.6)	Introduce a formal system of internal verification referenced in the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook and meet Edexcel/awarding organisation requirements	January 2013	Senior Management Group	Transparent evidence of institutional approval of all assessment design being fit for purpose before use with students	Internal Verification Committee	Minutes of the Internal Verification Committee Review Group report to Academic Board confirming actions taken
	Introduce a formal system of assessment moderation referenced in the	July 2013	Senior Management Group programme leaders	Examination Board operation showing Institutional verification,	Examination Board	Examination Board records External examiner reports

	College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook and meet Edexcel/awarding organisation requirements			approval and standardisation of cohort assessment outcomes following moderation		
• establish a formal tutorial system (paragraph 2.9)	Develop and implement standard tutorial policy for all higher education students	June 2013	Senior Management Group	Successful implementation of policy and tutorial practices Student feedback confirming level of support	Academic Board Programme committees Teaching, Learning and Development Group	Academic Board minutes Programme Committee minutes Teaching, Learning and Development Group minutes
• provide more comprehensive information about its higher education programmes for potential and current students (paragraph 3.4).	Introduce programme handbooks providing programme specifications Implement a formal communications policy for student information of College's higher education programmes (including a review of	February 2013 September 2013	Senior Management Group programme leaders Senior Management Group supported by Registrar and Marketing Officer	Clear and comprehensive programme handbooks that meet programme specification requirements Student and staff feedback confirming clear and comprehensive information provided	Academic Board Programme committees	Review Group report confirming actions taken considered by Academic Board Academic Board minutes Minutes of Programme Committee and Staff Forum

	the website)					
	Review Communications Policy	December 2013	Review Group			Review group report
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:						
• develop a network of alumni, employers and other external stakeholders to support the Advisory Board (paragraph 1.6)	Establish networks and support development of the new Advisory Body	December 2013	Chief Executive Officer	Network established with activities to develop membership of the Advisory Body supporting the College's portfolio and activities	Board of Governors	Review group report confirming actions taken Minutes of the Advisory Body Minutes of the Marketing Group
	Establishment of a marketing group	April 2013	Chief Executive Officer	Experienced academic staff drawing on external networks		
• establish a clear academic higher education calendar to consider and respond to external examiners' reports in a timely manner (paragraph 1.7)	Establish an academic calendar covering dates for all of the College's academic activity, for example Board Meetings, internal verification and examination dates with appropriate response dates for	February 2013	Registrar	The production of a clear and concise academic calendar enabling smooth College operation	Academic Board	Academic Board Minutes

	receiving and responding to external examiners' reports					
	Dissemination of the Academic Calendar to staff and the student body	February 2013	Senior Management Group	Student and staff feedback confirming effective working calendar with high student and staff satisfaction	Programme Committees	Programme Committee minutes and Staff Forum minutes
• establish and implement a consistent policy concerning the nature and quality of feedback provided to students (paragraph 2.7)	Implement a policy for providing student feedback on assessment to meet Quality Code requirements	February 2013	Senior Management Group	Successful implementation of feedback policy and procedures Student and staff report improved feedback processes	Programme committees Examination Boards Academic Board	Review group report confirming actions taken Programme Committee minutes Examination Board and Academic Board minutes
• implement the peer observation policy and introduce formal observation by line managers (paragraph 2.11)	Introduce new procedures for peer observation and line management observation Undertake observations and report staff development outcomes	February 2013 and then termly	Senior Management Group	Successful implementation of observation practices, with all staff observed and individual development needs identified and actions reported	Teaching, Learning and Development Group	Review Group report confirming actions taken Teaching and Learning Committee minutes Programme Committee

				Improved student feedback at programme committees	Programme Committee	minutes
• implement proposals to develop a virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.5)	Introduce new virtual learning environment	May 2013	Chief Executive Officer	Evidence of increased student awareness of the virtual learning environment	Academic Board	Review Group report on feedback from all stakeholders
	Survey new students on virtual learning environment workability during induction	February 2013	Registrar	Evidence of increased student satisfaction	Programme committees	Feedback data collected from students and staff
	Survey students at the end of the semester after introduction of the virtual learning environment	July 2013	Registrar	Evidence of both student awareness and satisfaction	Programme committees	Feedback through formal student feedback systems
	Survey all stakeholders	July 2012	Review Group	Evidence of smooth operation and completion of actions identified during the introductory phase		
• implement the planned formal processes for the management and	Introduce the formal policy for making changes to public information including	May 2013	Senior Management Group and Registrar	Successful new policy introduced	Senior Management Group Academic Board	Policy approved by Academic Board

oversight of public information (paragraph 3.7)	the introduction of a version control system					
	Develop staff awareness of new processes for publication, writing, proofreading and approval for public information	June 2013	Senior Management Group	Staff report awareness of processes and demonstrate their use	Programme Committees	Staff meeting and/or Development Day minutes
	Review the effectiveness of the formal policy for making changes to public information	October 2013	Review Group	New policy implemented	Academic Board	Effectiveness review report

Minutes of the Academic Board |
| • develop a more systematic process for obtaining stakeholder feedback on its public information (paragraph 3.8). | Develop formal process to review public information with stakeholders | June 2013 | Chief Executive Officer

Marketing Group | Successful data collection evidencing engagement with public information and stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of public information | Academic Board

Programme Committee | Minutes from the Academic Board

Programme Committee minutes |

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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