



**QAA**

**Outcomes from institutional audit**  
**Collaborative provision in the**  
**institutional audit reports**  
**Second series**



**Sharing good practice**

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### Summary

Consideration of the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 shows that the collaborative provision of more than 30 institutions was reviewed through this form of audit. Of the institutions where collaborative provision was not reviewed some had no such provision while others had partnership links outwith the scope of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA's) definition or had large or complex arrangements which were to be the subject of a later collaborative provision audit. Material in the reports considered in this paper provides information on both overseas and United Kingdom (UK)-based collaborative arrangements but mainly the latter.

Overall, the institutional audit reports show that almost all the relevant institutions were managing their collaborative provision in a careful and systematic way. Features of good practice relating to aspects of the way collaborative provision is managed are made in almost half of the institutional audit reports that discuss collaborative provision. The good practice that is identified in the reports falls into a number of broad areas:

- the contribution of collaborative activity to institutions' widening participation and regional development agendas
- how institutions and their partners support students and their learning
- the contribution of staff development to successful partnership working
- the maintenance of effective working relationships between partners
- the effective management by institutions' of their collaborative provision.

In the institutional audit reports that discuss collaborative provision there are clusters of recommendations in the following areas:

- the need for more strategic approaches to opening and managing collaborations
- the use of external reference points (including the Academic infrastructure) and external peers and practitioners to give greater consistency and transparency to institutional processes for collaborative provision
- the timing and adequacy of written agreements
- the need for institutions to state and explain their expectations (of their staff and their partners) with greater clarity, particularly in the area of academic standards
- the need for careful attention to the conduct of assessments and for secure arrangements for external examining.

The reports also comment in a number of instances on the need for the development or improvement of particular quality assurance procedures, including programme approval, monitoring and review.

The institutional audit reports show that the advice QAA issued in 1999 (and revised in 2004) through the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice), Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* has shaped the approach of many institutions across the sector, as have the findings of earlier quality audits that have

reviewed quality and academic standards arrangements for collaborative provision. While most of the reports referred to in this paper show that institutions have responded promptly and fully to these external reference points, reports noted several instances of deficiencies in written agreements and other associated documentation underpinning partnerships. In some cases reports found partnerships that had been opened with no formal records of the respective obligations and rights of the institution and its partners. In such circumstances reports found that the interests of students could be at risk.

On the whole, the institutional audit reports that address collaborative provision show that institutions are developing and supporting it successfully. Evidence from a substantial number of reports indicates that collaborations are playing an important role in widening participation in higher education, particularly through various regional consortia. The reports also provide much evidence of effective working between higher education institutions and their partners in the further education sector, with staff support and development playing an important part in this.

### Preface

An objective of institutional audit is 'to contribute, in conjunction with other mechanisms, to the promotion and enhancement of high quality in teaching and learning'. To provide institutions and other stakeholders with access to timely information on the findings of its institutional audits, QAA produces short working papers that describe features of good practice and summarise recommendations from the audit reports. Since 2005 these have been published under the generic title *Outcomes from institutional audit* (hereafter, *Outcomes...*). The first series of these papers drew on the findings of audit reports published between 2003 and November 2004. This paper is based on the findings of institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006.

A feature of good practice in institutional audit is considered to be a process, a practice, or a way of handling matters which, in the context of the particular institution, is improving, or leading to the improvement of, the management of quality and/or academic standards, and learning and teaching. *Outcomes...* papers are intended to provide readers with pointers to where features of good practice relating to particular topics can be located in the published audit reports. Each *Outcomes...* paper therefore identifies the features of good practice in individual reports associated with the particular topic and their location in the Main report. Although all features of good practice are listed, in the interests of brevity not all are discussed in this paper. In the initial listing in paragraph 10, the first reference is to the numbered or bulleted lists of features of good practice at the end of each institutional audit report, the second to the relevant paragraphs in Section 2 of the Main report.

Throughout the body of this paper, references to features of good practice in the institutional audit reports give the institution's name and the paragraph number from Section 2 of the Main report. So that readers can readily refer to the relevant audit report, the name of the institution used when identifying references is the name that appears on the relevant audit report on QAA's website. For those institutions where a change of name has subsequently taken place, this is noted in Appendix 1 (page 24), and is the correct name at the time of publication of this paper.

It should be emphasised that the features of good practice mentioned in this paper should be considered in their proper institutional context, and that each is perhaps best viewed as a stimulus to reflection and further development rather than as a model for emulation. A note on the topics identified for this second series of *Outcomes...* papers can be found at Appendix 3 (page 28).

As noted above, this second series of *Outcomes...* papers is based on the 59 institutional audit reports published by August 2006, and the titles of papers are in most cases the same as their counterparts in the first series of *Outcomes...* papers. Like the first series of *Outcomes...* papers, those in the second series are perhaps best seen as 'work in progress'. Although QAA retains copyright in the contents of the *Outcomes...* papers, they can be freely downloaded from QAA's website and cited, with acknowledgement.

### Introduction and general overview

1 This paper is based on a review of the outcomes of the 59 institutional audit reports published by August 2006 (see Appendix 1, page 24). A note on the methodology used to produce this and other papers in this second *Outcomes...* series can be found at Appendix 4 (page 30).

2 More than 30 audit reports discuss collaborative provision in detail. The remainder either had no such provision, had partnership links outwith the scope of QAA's definition (see below, paragraphs 3 and 4) or had large or complex arrangements which were to be subject to a later, separate, collaborative provision audit. Throughout this paper the term 'institution' should normally be read as referring to the awarding institution that provided the focus of each of the institutional audits.

3 During the period covered by this paper, two editions of the *Code of practice, Section 2* were in force consecutively. The first edition, published in 1999 under the title *Collaborative provision* (the 1999 edition), defined its concerns in paragraph 6 as 'collaborative arrangements involving the provision of programmes of study and the granting of awards and qualifications'. It did not interpret the word 'collaborative' any more widely.

4 In 2004 a revised edition of the *Code of practice, Section 2* was published, under the title *Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* (the 2004 edition). Paragraph 13 of this edition contains a definition of collaborative provision that is substantially the same as that used in the first edition, although it elaborates slightly that 'collaborative provision denotes educational provision leading to an award...of an awarding institution delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation'. The 2004 edition stresses that the focus of the 1999 edition, on the 'equivalence' in awards between the provision offered by the awarding institution and that offered by its partners, had been replaced by an emphasis on the alignment of all academic awards with the advice of QAA's Academic Infrastructure.

5 Both the 1999 and 2004 editions of Section 2 of the *Code of practice* stress an underlying point about collaborative provision, widely recognised within higher education, that as longer chains of management and reporting are created between a higher education awarding body and the point at which learning takes place and students are assessed, the potential arises for the academic standards of awards and learning opportunities for students to be put at risk. As the 1999 edition expressed it:

The *Code* is based on the key principle that collaborative arrangements, wherever and however organised, should widen learning opportunities without prejudice either to the standard of the award or qualification or the quality of what is offered to the student. Further, the arrangements for assuring the quality and standards should be as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the responsibility of a single institution. This remains the case even when a partner organisation is itself also an Awarding Institution, as with joint or dual awards. [Paragraph 7 of the 1999 edition].

6 The 2004 edition of Section 2 of the *Code of practice*, as its revised title suggests, has a broader scope than the 1999 edition and, insofar as flexible and distributed methods of delivery were part of collaborative arrangements then as the 2004 edition became available as a reference point, institutions were expected to take account of the variations that the 2004 edition of the *Code of practice, Section 2* introduced. Throughout this paper references otherwise than where specified are to the 2004 edition of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed distributed learning (including e-learning)*.

7 By way of further clarification, for the purposes of this paper, references to flexible or distributed learning in the audit reports are only discussed where they are expressly related to matters to do with collaborative provision. Material in the reports on flexible and distributed learning is considered in more detail in another paper in this series, *Institutions' support for e-learning*.

8 The audit reports considered in this paper point to a gradual expansion of collaborative provision overall, even while some institutions were withdrawing from such provision and others stated they were scaling down their collaborative activities.

9 The audit reports that discuss collaborative provision arrangements also show the considerable variety in the size and nature of the collaborative provision covered. For example, one institution had almost 25 per cent of nearly 20,000 students registered on programmes delivered through partnerships, whereas another had 'very limited collaborative provision as defined by QAA comprising first-year language teaching (undertaken and assessed elsewhere) and the provision of one course on one occasion.' This paper discusses material from the reports that deals with both UK-based and overseas partnership links.

### Features of good practice

10 Consideration of the published institutional audit reports shows the following features of good practice relating to institutions' management of their collaborative provision.

#### The contribution to widening participation

- the effective management of collaborative arrangements at institutional and programme level, which are characterised by positive working relationships with both higher education and further education partner colleges [University of Leicester, paragraph 287 iv; paragraph 153]
- the strength of the Higher Education Business Partnership, its value in respect of the provision of regional opportunities for higher education, and its potential for future development [University of Teesside, paragraph 219 iv; paragraph 114]
- the depth and scope of relationship at all levels with strategic further education college partners that contributes to the management of the quality of learning and securing of standards. [Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, paragraph 238 v; paragraphs 132 and 197]
- the opportunities for widening participation afforded by delivery of the University's programmes by its own staff through the Network of Hope colleges [Liverpool Hope University College, paragraph 236 iii; paragraphs 12 and 105]

- the College's approach to outreach activity, exemplified by the [Innovative Scheme for Post-docs in Research and Evaluation] INSPIRE project and the collaboration with Thames Valley University [Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (Imperial College London), paragraph 302 iv; paragraphs 149 and 151].

### **Support for the student experience**

- the range, accessibility and utility of the learning resources provided to students, including those in partner institutions [University of Teesside, paragraph 219 ii; paragraph 97]
- the clear link between student feedback and action at all levels within the institution and its collaborative partners [University of Central England in Birmingham, paragraph 219 i; paragraphs 75 and 100].

### **The contribution of staff development**

- the ways in which staff development is aligned with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to provide opportunities for all staff, including part-time staff and those in partner institutions, and the promotion of learning and teaching through a comprehensive programme for the induction and reward of staff [University of Teesside, paragraph 219 i; paragraphs 77, 79, 82, 84, 85 and 88]
- the initiatives of the [Quality Affairs Office] in developing the College's quality agenda, including staff development initiatives in collaboration with partner institutions [Goldsmiths College, University of London, paragraph 213 i; paragraphs 32 and 118]
- the cohesive and comprehensive approach to staff development through: the linking of departmental staff development coordinators with the Staff Development Officer in Human Resources; the linking of staff development to strategic objectives; the participation of St George's senior staff in collaborative activities such as the Sunningdale Action Learning Programme and the Coaching, Action Learning and Mentoring Network for Higher Education [St George's Hospital Medical School, paragraph 188 ii; paragraphs 93, 97, 98 and 183]
- the participation of a wide range of staff, including visiting tutors, staff on fractional contracts and staff from collaborative partners, in staff development activities [University of Central England in Birmingham, paragraph 219 ii; paragraph 91].

### **Effective working relationships**

- the joint venture with Kingston University which allows transfer of good practice in quality assurance through joint membership of committees and shared procedures and practice [St George's Hospital Medical School, paragraph 188 i; paragraphs 33, 35, 38, 43, 85 and 158]
- the use of the Library Liaison Group as a forum for liaison between the University library and libraries in the partner Colleges [University of Luton, paragraph 251 iii; paragraph 112]
- the close and productive working relationships with collaborative partners, which are closely integrated into the quality and standards infrastructure at institutional and departmental level [University of Worcester, paragraph 250 v; paragraphs 128 and 204].



### **The importance of good management and procedural rigour**

- the strategic approach to and effective management of collaborative provision which are governed by well-documented, clear and comprehensive procedures [City University, paragraph 320 vi; paragraphs 146 to 162]
- the comprehensive quality assurance process that supports collaborative provision [University of Surrey, paragraph 221 (first bullet point); paragraphs 32 and 120-126]
- the rigorous process for approving formal international partnerships as exemplified by the arrangements with Taylor's College in Malaysia [University of the West of England, Bristol, paragraph 257 v; paragraph 129].

11 Two further audit reports, while not explicitly identifying features of good practice, explicitly express approval of the awarding institution's management of its arrangements for collaborative provision. They are:

- Thames Valley University, paragraphs 126-7
- Canterbury Christ Church University College, paragraph 138.

### **Topics for discussion**

12 A consideration of the features of good practice and recommendations in the institutional audit reports which cover collaborative provision suggests that the following broad topics merit further discussion:

- characteristics of collaborative provision
- the basis for undertaking collaborative provision
- oversight of quality and academic standards in collaborative provision
- handbooks and guidelines for collaborative provision
- the use of external reference points in collaborative provision, including follow-ups to earlier audit reports that have addressed collaborative provision
- approval of new partnerships and their review, including written agreements and reviews of partnerships
- approval of new provision and its monitoring and review, including the role of external peers
- suspension of partnerships including closure
- assessment and external examining arrangements for collaborative provision
- information for and from students studying through collaborative provision
- staff support and development for collaborative provision
- communications between collaborating partners.

### **Characteristics of collaborative provision**

13 One of the most striking feature of the collaborative activities reviewed within the institutional audit reports is the variety of forms they can take. They include:

- arrangements for making joint degrees with other degree awarding institutions
- institutional validation

- collaboration at programme level
- distributed support for distance learning
- franchises
- consortia
- associate colleges
- outreach centres.

14 As instances of this variety, one audit report described the use of a range of sixth form colleges that provide venues for teaching provided by institutional staff, without any delegation of academic authority over standards. Another offered an instance of admission to the institution's own degree programmes with advanced standing, based on scrutiny of the curriculum match between the institution and the collaborative partner. At another level, a further report described collaborative links that enable students to receive degrees from the institution hosting the audit and another institution overseas that also had its own degree awarding powers.

### The basis for undertaking collaborative provision

15 When they are discussed in the institutional audit reports, collaborative arrangements often feature as part of broader strategy for widening participation. The reports refer to a range of institutions across the sector that are working, often with further education colleges, to expand learning opportunities, often through increasing the range of foundation years and Foundation Degrees respectively recognised and awarded by the institution. For example, one institution led a formally constituted consortium that the report saw as providing important regional opportunities for higher education. The report found that the contribution that this partnership made to the institution's 'mission for widening participation... and its potential for future development, [was] a feature of good practice' [University of Teesside, paragraphs 111-114]. In other cases, the significance of what may be termed the regional agenda was noticeable in the reports, and the contributions being made to this through the collaborative links established by a variety of higher education institutions, with widely differing missions and concerns.

16 Several audit reports note that in some institutions the impetus to develop collaborative ventures could arise from "'bottom-up" initiatives from departments' as opportunities have arisen. One such report commented that while these initiatives had so far been well managed, there was now 'sufficient critical mass for [the institution] to consider a strategic review of its formal structures to...oversee the quality assurance of its collaborative provision and ensure the sharing of good practice across [the institution].'

17 A number of audit reports sketch out the strategic advantages to institutions that can flow from collaborative arrangements, chiefly in the area of widening their influence through partnerships. Various reports refer to the effective management links at institutional and programme level between the institution and its partners, with evidence of reciprocity and genuine partnerships that were seen to have gone beyond the purely commercial or formally contractual, further supported through the day-to-day links between the respective award bearing institutions and their partners.

One report identified a 'real partnership in developing relationships, with the Board of Colleges playing a critical role in ensuring smooth integration, and further supported by effective collaboration at programme level' [University of Leicester, paragraphs 150-52; see also University of Worcester, paragraphs 128 and 204].

### Oversight of quality and academic standards in collaborative provision

18 The institutional audit reports show that corporate responsibility for collaborative provision is often vested in a postholder at pro vice-chancellor level. In addition, the audit reports describe a range of senior posts being created to provide direct management of partnership arrangements. Examples of the titles of such senior positions include a 'Dean of Validation', a 'Director of External Academic Relationships', a 'Manager of Academic Partnerships', and a 'Director of Collaborative and Sub Degrees Programmes'.

19 Alongside this management line, the audit reports almost always identify a committee structure through which the deliberative oversight of collaborative activity takes place, reporting ultimately to the institution's senior committee responsible for quality and standards, generally its Senate or Academic Board. Sometimes - in order to achieve a balance between devolved responsibility for collaboration and centralised authority - the activities of partner institutions may be reported directly to the relevant institutional committee, an approach which in the particular context of several institutions was seen as good practice [University of Surrey, paragraph 126].

20 The audit reports refer with some frequency to the varying ways in which institutions marry the delegation of operational responsibilities for collaborative provision to schools, faculties and departments with the maintenance of centralised oversight of what is done in the institution's name. Generally, the reports indicate that many institutions see merit in having arrangements where operational responsibilities for collaborative provision are exercised at local level. Where the grounds for such arrangements are outlined in the reports they include benefits for subject or programme collegiality and reciprocity between the awarding institution and its partners, while retaining central knowledge of what is being done in the awarding institution's name. In one report, for example, where the institution's 'rigorous approach' to the management of its collaborative provision was regarded as a feature of good practice, the detailed planning and development of a particular partnership had been undertaken at faculty level while the institution 'had taken an active role in the quality management process' [University of the West of England, Bristol, paragraph 129].

21 When an institution's arrangements do not provide for such central oversight, institutional audit reports are likely to suggest that it might usefully be introduced. In one institution, for example, where the opening of partnership arrangements had been hitherto driven from departments, the report recommended that a strategic review of quality assurance for collaborative provision would be timely, in order to support plans for the expansion of overseas provision. In another case, the report noted 'the absence of a systematic institutional-level overview of quality and academic standards in collaborative provision' and recommended that an institutional policy be drawn up 'to guide the strategic planning' of such partnerships.

22 Audit reports recognise that institutions often appreciate the risks associated with collaborative arrangements as delivery of programmes moves further from their direct control. Some reports note the common practice of arrangements to enable the quality of collaborative provision and the academic standards of the associated awards to be safeguarded through the same range of mechanisms as for programmes offered and awards made directly by the institution. Sometimes the maintenance of a close alignment between provision delivered by the partner and in-house provision can include arrangements for reciprocal membership on review and programme committees that, in particular contexts, can represent good practice [University of Surrey, paragraph 124].

23 The audit reports also frequently note the modifications institutions have made to their arrangements to take account of the differing levels of potential risk associated with collaborative provision. Such modifications might be to policies and regulatory frameworks, and extend to approval and review processes for provision validated or franchised by the awarding institution (see paragraphs 46-56) [City University, paragraphs 147 and 149].

24 As part of the process of assessing how effectively institutions are managing collaborative arrangements at programme level, many of the audit reports identify the importance of link tutors - based in departments, schools or programme teams - in providing support to partners and in providing a point of contact between programme teams in both the partner and the institution and the latter's central offices. One report described this role as being 'to support staff in partner institutions, keep the host departments informed about the progress of each cohort and maintain academic currency'. Sometimes such arrangements involved the link tutor's membership of one or more programme committees in partner institutions in order to further enhance the consistency of practices between the two institutions (see paragraph 75).

### Policies and procedures

25 Comments in the institutional audit reports show that there is a widespread understanding that managing collaborative provision well requires careful and sustained attention. In this context, many of the audit reports comment on the close attention institutions have paid to Section 2 of the *Code of practice* when formulating their policies and procedures. In some cases, this might be to update their quality and academic standards arrangements in the light of the publication of the 2004 edition of Section 2; in others to ensure a close match between internal policies and procedures and the advice of Section 2; and, in others, to address the findings of earlier continuation audit or overseas audit reports.

26 In several audit reports the ways in which institutions have drawn on the advice of Section 2 in either its 1999 or 2004 versions was seen as good practice. In one case, for example, the institution's 'well-documented, clear and comprehensive procedures', that had taken 'account of the section of the *Code of practice* on collaborative provision' were praised [City University, paragraph 161]. In another case, the institutional audit report identified a comprehensive quality assurance process, with robust procedures for validation and accreditation and their periodic review, and systematic monitoring of academic standards, quality, learning support and staff development. In all the areas of the particular institution's work with its partner institutions the report noted that

'quality assurance processes are laid down in a Quality Assurance Handbook, produced specifically for Associated Institutions, which is consistent with the University's Academic Standards Guidelines and these guidelines are in turn consistent with the *Code of practice*' [University of Surrey, paragraph 120]. The same report also noted that the awarding institution's insistence upon the management of collaborative links in alignment with institutional principles and procedures provided 'a source of transparency and consistency' [University of Surrey, paragraph 126].

27 Consideration of the audit reports also shows some instances where policies and processes were found to need further development. One report, for example, identified a need to 'systematise and document [institutional] requirements and expectations for the quality assurance of the support and delivery of programmes in each type of collaborative arrangement'. Another report pointed to the importance of reviewing operational protocols for assuring standards of awards offered under collaborative arrangements.

### Handbooks and guidelines for collaborative provision

28 The institutional audit reports refer to the various internal handbooks and devices that individual institutions have developed to support their operational practices for collaborative provision. These include validation handbooks in which are detailed procedures on approval, operation and monitoring; flowcharts and check lists; and specific handbooks for the guidance of partner institutions.

29 In most cases, where handbooks and guidelines for collaborative provision are linked to other institutional guidelines and policies, the audit reports found that they were fit for the purpose of governing and guiding what is done in collaborative arrangements. As noted elsewhere in this paper, the reports show the pronounced influence of Section 2 of the *Code of practice*. In many cases, reports identify a close alignment between institutions' handbooks for the conduct of validation, monitoring and review and Section 2. In other cases, however, several reports recommended that institutions ensure that their handbooks more explicitly adhere to the *Code of practice*.

30 In some cases audit reports identify a need for improvements to institutional handbooks or quality documentation, for example by including more information for the benefit of partners or, more usually, by bringing such documentation up to date. Evidence in the reports shows that when institutions enter into a type of partnership that is new to them, modifying the guidance they offer on quality and academic standards arrangements in a timely fashion, so that it matches new circumstances, can be challenging. In the case of one institution the report found that it needed to update its collaborative provision handbook in light of the introduction of a new category of partnership, in this case an overseas link.

### The use of external reference points in collaborative provision

31 Institutional audit reports can refer to institutions' use of external reference points in their collaborative provision at a number of points. Not least this is because, as paragraph 4 notes, since 2004 the use of the Academic Infrastructure as a key external reference point has been seen as a means whereby awarding institutions can ensure that judgements about the quality of provision and the academic standards of

awards are broadly based. In the reports, the *Code of practice* is seen as a key external reference point for institutions and the reports invariably comment on how institutions have worked with the various sections of the *Code of practice*.

32 While many audit reports note instances where the advice of one or more sections of the *Code of practice* has been adopted verbatim by institutions, references to the more thoroughgoing use of all elements of the Academic Infrastructure to support collaborative provision are less frequent. One report noted, however, that the institution's validation handbook contained no mention of QAA's *Code of practice*, including Section 2 or to other elements of the Academic Infrastructure. It recommended that a means be found '...to ensure that all institutions with students registered for awards...are fully [informed] of [institutional] expectations in relation to the Academic Infrastructure'.

### **Follow-up to earlier audit reports that have addressed collaborative provision**

33 Between 2003 and 2006, QAA's template for the institutional audit reports required audit teams to describe and analyse how institutions had responded to the recommendations of earlier QAA reports. As an example of such comments, one report looked at an institution's overseas collaborative provision at some length in order to explore the way that the institution had responded to concerns in an earlier report. It came to the view that considerable progress had been made, albeit it found that the institution's quality handbook now needed to be extended to cover all aspects of relations between the institution and its partners, rather than confine itself to its quality assurance processes leading to approval. Another report found that the relevant institution had successfully covered a range of matters previously identified with overseas collaborative provision. This included statements on the language of instruction and assessment, and the provision of arrangements for comparing the performance of students on modules studied at the institution and the same modules studied by students based with an overseas partner.

34 Audit reports contain only limited evidence that suggestions from QAA or earlier reports on the management of collaborative provision had not been properly implemented. In one such case, however, while the report found the institution's approach to its collaborative provision to be fundamentally sound, it nonetheless noted that the institution had been slow in publishing its guidelines on collaborative provision as an earlier audit report had recommended. In another case, while the regulatory changes recommended in an earlier report had been made, the institution had not checked for itself that existing and subsequent formal agreements had been modified to give effect to its expectations.

### **Approval of new partnerships and their review**

35 Section 2 of the *Code of practice* expresses the expectation that when contemplating a collaboration with a new partner, the process of approving a relationship with that partner will involve gathering information on the partner through due diligence enquiries. Only a few institutional audit reports explicitly mention the inclusion of due diligence enquiries as a standard item in institutions'



procedures to establish new partnerships. One report noted that a failure to undertake due diligence procedures, that had been the subject of a recommendation in an earlier audit report, had yet to be remedied (see also paragraph 39).

36 Almost all the institutional audit reports that discuss collaborative provision state the view of the respective awarding institutions that they select partners on the basis of clear criteria, generally linked in some way to strategic plans and with consideration of alignment with missions. Sometimes, for example, the overriding criterion may be geographical proximity.

37 Section 2 also suggests that the potential risks associated with collaborative arrangements need to be actively managed from the outset. There is some evidence - although the audit reports do not lay great emphasis on this - that some institutions insist on a separation in their arrangements between the consideration and approval of the business case and discussion of the academic grounds for entering into a partnership. There is also some reference in the reports to the effect that arrangements that ensure an interval between the approval of a relationship with the partner institution and the approval of any collaborative programme can be viewed as sound.

38 Institutional audit reports rarely indicate that approval procedures for new partnerships had been found to be inadequate. In one case, however, where relations with the partner had initially been agreed on the basis that its role would be limited to the provision of study facilities and some learning support for students, it had subsequently been agreed (without additional consideration of its capacities) that the partner should undertake 'aspects of the academic delivery including some marking'. The report recommended that the awarding institution review its arrangements for approving partners to deliver the programme, especially where assessment will be undertaken by the partner.

39 In another case, where a previous audit report had recommended urgent action to remedy defects in procedures, the subsequent institutional audit report found that conditions attached to the approval of the partnership (the retrospective completion of due diligence procedures) prior to the enrolment of students had not been followed up. The report noted that the awarding institution was planning to expand its portfolio of overseas collaborative provision and in this context it recommended that the institution continue to develop its guidelines for collaborative provision (especially that of international collaboration) and to review its arrangements for the approval of such arrangements.

40 One audit report makes the point by exception, that most institutions had attained a sound realisation of need to assess the risks entailed in opening a new partnership - particularly with prospective overseas partners. In this exceptional case, the report found no evidence that the institution had developed 'additional arrangements for approving and monitoring overseas collaborations' despite operating 'potentially "global" MBAs' and having a strategic aim to develop 'joint degrees' with 'top-level Asian universities' including 'institutions in China'. The report observed of the institution's arrangements for its collaborative provision overall that they 'seemed to rely too heavily on the reputation of [partner] institutions

operating in very different [higher education] environments'. The institution was recommended to 'review its procedures for assuring the quality and standards of collaborative arrangements, with particular regard to potential overseas partners'.

### Written agreements

41 Written agreements (sometimes referred to as 'memoranda of agreement' or 'memoranda of cooperation') provide the formal basis for the partnership between collaborating institutions, setting down the respective obligations, rights and financial expectations of the partners. Formal agreements also serve as the basis for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided for students studying with partners are suitable to enable them to proceed to their award and that the academic standard of the award itself is identical across the awarding institution and its partners.

42 In most cases the audit reports show that formal agreements are drawn up in the light of the advice of Section 2 of the *Code of practice*. In one example, however, this advice had not been taken into consideration in the framing of a memorandum. In this case the report came to the view that the awarding institution's firm statement of high-level policy, barring any partner from agreeing separately with one or more third parties that the latter could prepare students for the institution's awards (often referred to as 'serial franchising') had not been made sufficiently explicit in a formal agreement. Likewise, in the same report the institution's requirement that the issuing of publicity material by its partners about a collaborative programme should be subject to its scrutiny and agreement was also considered not to be sufficiently clear in its formal agreements. The report recommended that both these matters be addressed.

43 Sometimes written agreements set out to harmonise operational practices and deliberative arrangements between the institution and its partner. For example, in one institution the 'care with which policy and procedure for the management of collaborative provision had been constructed' was identified as a feature of good practice. In this case the report noted the detail and clarity of policies and procedures and that policy guidance was supported by detailed memoranda of agreement, and operations manuals and annual schedules governing the approval, revalidation, and monitoring of provision offered through partnership links [Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, paragraphs 130 and 132].

44 While the preparation and signature of formal agreements between awarding and partner institutions is clearly standard practice, as advised in Precept A10 of Section 2 of the *Code of practice*, reports identified occasional instances of collaborative programmes running without a formal written agreement, or without adhering to formal partnership approval requirements. In some instances audit reports stated that longstanding collaborative arrangements had continued in the absence of formal agreements. In one case this applied to a programme that had both ceased to recruit and was running out, a situation in which, the report suggested, students' interests could be compromised because of the need to ensure proper 'aftercare' for past graduates and current students. The report concluded that the awarding institution and its partner should move to conclude an agreement without delay.



### Reviews of partnerships

45 When discussing collaborative provision, only a few institutional audit reports discuss the procedures institutions have adopted to review or to reapprove institutional partnerships. In one case, however, the relevant report noted that the awarding institution's procedures for the reapproval of a partnership did not provide for the participation of an external peer. It observed that '...the process of periodic review of collaborative organisations would be strengthened by the involvement of external experts to provide an additional perspective on the operation of the partnership and confirmation of comparability of the [institution's] approach with sector-wide practice'.

### Approval of new provision, monitoring and review

#### Approving new provision

46 The institutional audit reports show that many awarding institutions use the same or closely similar arrangements for validating and approving new provision to be delivered by their partners as apply internally to their own provision. In some cases, where the conduct of validation and approval processes has been devolved to faculties, schools or other subsidiary units, awarding institutions apply similar arrangements to proposals for provision for delivery by or through partners. In many cases, however, awarding institutions adjust their 'standard' validation and approval arrangements for collaborative provision.

47 One audit report noted that the process for approving the particular provision included a check that the institution's own procedures for partner approval had been fulfilled, together with strengthened arrangements for the participation of external peers. In another case validation of collaborative provision to be offered with or through a partner resulted in a formal course agreement with the latter, which is reviewed annually. In another case, the report noted that the approval of new provision to be offered through a partnership required the completion and evaluation of a report, following a centrally-provided 'resource template', to test that the partner's learning environment and support arrangements were sufficient to enable it to offer the provision satisfactorily. The same institution had also adopted the practice of specifying the maximum number of students that could be recruited to the programme in order to ensure that their learning opportunities remain sufficient. Overall the reports show that the practices followed by awarding institutions are consistent with the advice of the *Code of practice*.

#### Role of external peers in the validation and approval of provision

48 Many sections of the *Code of practice* strongly emphasise the contribution external peer participation can make in all academic processes, and its importance in helping institutions to ensure that sound decisions are made about the development of their academic portfolios. The institutional audit reports note the widespread presence of the voice of external peers (and, for vocational provision, practitioners) in programme approval and review. For example, one report found that 'the use of external advisors for validation arrangements exemplified the [institution's] proactive approach to externality in the enhancement of the quality of provision' [City University, paragraph 155].

49 At the same time, however, one or two audit reports contain suggestions for further action to strengthen the contribution of the external peer element in validation and approval, not least so that institutions can be confident that proposals to develop new provision, or extend existing validated provision to new locations, receive thorough scrutiny. In this connection, one report suggested that institutional oversight of its collaborative provision would be strengthened by 'the inclusion of external members on all validation panels, irrespective of whether provision of the programme in question has already been validated at another location.'

50 There is only a relatively modest consideration of overseas partnership arrangements in the audit reports that form the basis for this paper. In one case already referred to, however, the relevant report noted that the approval of new franchised provision at an overseas partner (shortly after institutional approval) had been undertaken by a panel, the membership of which did not include an external peer. The approval of the new franchised provision allowed for some elements of the proposed provision to be delivered and assessed in a language other than English. The report recommended to the awarding institution that, for the future, in such a case it would be wise to have an appropriate external peer on the panel conducting overseas validation and like events, especially when assessment and delivery was to be in a language other than English. In another case, the report was able to confirm that the institution carried out financial checks on potential partners and that it verified the business case for such ventures but was unable to identify whether any academic or other checks (for example on learning and student support arrangements) were conducted on potential partners.

### **Monitoring collaborative provision**

51 Most of the institutional audit reports that contain substantive discussions of institutions' arrangements for collaborative provision describe and analyse how the academic well-being of individual programmes is monitored. Reviewing the nature and scope of such arrangements, the approaches taken by individual institutions can be located along a spectrum, at one end of which are the few institutions that collect little or no information about their collaborative provision. In such cases the immediate monitoring of such programmes and of the progress of students may be left to individual departments or the institution's partners. In one exceptional case, the relevant report observed of the institution's arrangements for monitoring its collaborative provision that they had the same characteristics as its arrangements for opening new partnerships, in that they relied 'too heavily on the reputation of [partner] institutions'.

52 Along the spectrum outlined above can be located institutions that have put in place quality assurance and academic standards procedures for their collaborative provision that augment those adopted for their on-campus provision. Based on what can be characterised as a preventative approach, the most thoroughgoing of such procedures can include additional reporting requirements for their own faculties, schools and departments and for their partners, together with additional posts (sometimes at several levels) and committees established specifically to monitor collaborative provision. Reports that comment on such institutional approaches generally note that they match institutions' particular circumstances, enabling some

large institutions with devolved arrangements, for example, to allow departments schools and faculties scope for action while maintaining a clear central understanding of their activities.

53 In a few cases, audit reports for smaller institutions have also found the kind of wide-ranging and comprehensive reporting and scrutiny arrangements described above. In one such instance, the report questioned the value to the institution of some of the information it was collecting on its collaborative provision through its wide ranging procedures, and suggested that it might be timely to review the burdens they were placing on individuals and committees.

54 In the case of many institutions, their arrangements for managing the quality of their collaborative provision and safeguarding the academic standards of their awards lie somewhere between the two positions described in paragraphs 51 and 52. Typically, the aim of institutions is to have arrangements that enable them to highlight collaborative programmes and the students studying through them so that they do not get overlooked in monitoring. Approaches followed by institutions for these purposes include flagging all monitoring reports for programmes offered through collaborative provision for separate consideration by a member of registry, a senior officer, or an identified committee at school, faculty or institution-level (or all levels). Some institutions also make use of a comparison of completion and progression statistics for like provision offered on-campus and through collaborative provision, to identify anomalies for further scrutiny; additionally some institutions review assessment data from all partner institutions for comparative and analytical purposes.

### **Periodic review of collaborative programmes**

55 A number of institutional audit reports refer to institutions' arrangements for reviewing provision delivered by or through partners. As with the approval of new provision, arrangements for periodic review generally show some commonality with awarding institutions' own internal processes and their schedules, although sometimes with modifications to take account of the increased risk associated with collaborative provision.

56 In one case an audit report noted that this perception of heightened risk had led the awarding institution to undertake periodic reviews for collaborative provision at shorter intervals than for on-campus provision. In another case the institution had provided for programmes delivered with or through partners to be flexibly included in its departmentally-based periodic review processes or, in the case of partners with extensive portfolios of provision leading to its awards, for the institution to undertake a 'special review' of the collaborative provision. The audit reports show that overall external peer participation in such review activities is common.

### **Arrangements to suspend or close partnerships**

57 There are only a few references in the audit reports to arrangements by institutions to support the suspension or closure of partnerships, including arrangements for the support of students. The few references to be found suggest that institutions are aware of their responsibilities in such cases. One report, for example, described an instance where procedures for a formal closure agreement were in place, while another noted

the effective management of transitional arrangements following the withdrawal of a former partner from a formal agreement. These had included the maintenance of cross-representation on the committees of the two former partners and the establishment of a 'Joint Quality Assurance Consultative Group' to monitor the jointly operated provision as it was run out. These arrangements were seen as good practice [University of Surrey, paragraph 122].

58 One institutional audit report noted, however, an instance where in internal papers the responsible institution had expressed concerns about the viability of a programme offered with a partner overseas, and had therefore decided not to admit students to the coming session 'whilst the programme settles down'. In this case the report recommended that the institution should monitor the impact of a suspension of recruitment while there were continuing students.

### Assessment and external examining arrangements for collaborative programmes

59 As noted above, the institutional audit reports show that, in general, institutions have aligned their arrangements with the advice of Section 2 of the *Code of practice*, in which Precept A21 advises that 'External examining procedures for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements should be consistent with the awarding institution's normal practices...'. The reports show that almost all awarding institutions are aware of the importance of ensuring the alignment of academic standards between awards attained by students studying directly at their own campuses and those attained by students studying with or through a partner.

60 Only a few of the audit reports on which this paper is based discuss overseas collaborative provision in any detail. One such report, where the language of instruction and assessment of the relevant provision was not English, noted plans for an annual 'cross-marking' exercise. The proposal was for examples of student work from a previous session to be shared among partners offering a common programme in order to ensure that all had the same understanding of the academic standards to be attained by students and the marking procedures to be followed by staff. The report saw this as a 'potentially useful' development, but the responsible institution had yet to clarify how the translation of the student work into the other languages was to be undertaken. The report viewed as more serious the fact that 'the [institution had] not yet been able to appoint an external examiner with the linguistic and experiential scope necessary to provide full oversight of the assessment process and standards of achievement'. The relevant report stressed the need to resolve these matters in order for the institution to be able to assure the standards of awards in the collaborative provision.

61 Although in general audit reports found that the arrangements that institutions had in place for the assessment of students' work were satisfactory, there were some occasions when scope for improvement was identified. One report identified a lack of consistency and definition in the arrangements for the marking of assignments, and recommended the establishment of a clear understanding of the respective responsibilities of staff at the institution and those in collaborative partners for the marking and moderation of summative assessed work.

62 In the case of partnership arrangements with small and/or specialist institutions, one audit report noted the importance of not restricting the recruitment of external examiners to similar institutions. It recommended that 'external peers...be drawn from the full breadth of the UK higher education sector' in order to ensure 'that the academic standards of the awards are comparable to with those of the UK higher education sector at large.'

### Student support and information in collaborative programmes

63 There is evidence in the institutional audit reports of the measures some institutions take to satisfy themselves that the learning opportunities and support arrangements for students studying for their awards with partners are satisfactory. In several cases, the reports also show that institutions are seeking to maintain direct contacts with students studying for their awards with their partners. One report noted the institution's practice of ensuring that those of its staff who it had designated to act as 'link tutors' with programmes in its partners attended the induction sessions organised by partners for students studying for the institution's awards.

64 In several cases, audit reports discuss partnerships where the location of the institution and one or more of its partners enables them to share facilities and services. In one such case the report identified as a feature of good practice 'the availability, accessibility and range of [the] learning resources provided' to students, including those in partner institutions [University of Teesside, 97].

65 In other cases, institutions have made arrangements to provide students studying for their awards 'off-campus' (usually, but not always with partners) access to their own virtual learning environment (VLE). Some institutions also use VLEs to support the collection of feedback information from students on the learning they have undertaken with the support of partners and to provide staff development and continuing professional development to staff based at their partners.

66 Although there are indications in the institutional audit reports that, in general, the support and information given to students in partner establishments is appropriate to their needs, there are sometimes suggestions that more careful monitoring is required in order to ensure that new partners are able to deliver the level and quality of learning opportunities appropriate for the particular course or programme.

### Information for and from students studying through collaborative provision

67 Consideration of the institutional audit reports that explore collaborative provision arrangements suggests that most institutions and their partners provide students studying through partnership links with accurate information both before and after enrolment. In one case, however, a report noted that 'a new [Foundation Degree] course was approved to run in a college where subsequently students were surprised by some of the course content, unclear about its relevance, and still unaware of the title of the award they would receive'.

68 In another case an audit report expressed concern about the potential for misleading students over the status of partner institutions, because the way the level of association with the institution was conveyed in the papers available to the audit was not justified. The report considered that without careful attention to publicity material and the information provided to students before enrolment, students could be given to understand that what was in fact an informal arrangement had a more formal and established status. It recommended that formal agreements be drawn up to give greater protection to the interests of the institution and its students.

69 Several audit reports discuss the collection and analysis of feedback information by institutions from students studying for their awards with partners. In one case, a report identified as a feature of good practice the 'clear link between student feedback and action at all levels within the institution' and its collaborative partners [University of Central England in Birmingham, paragraphs 75 and 100]. In another case a report noted the use of the institution's VLE to collect feedback from students studying with partners (see paragraph 64).

### Staff support and development for collaborative provision

70 A number of institutional audit reports describe institutions' arrangements for ensuring that the staff based with their partners have opportunities to benefit from staff development to enable them to deliver higher education provision on a continuing basis. The reports show that many institutions routinely make staff development opportunities provided for their own staff available to their partners where this is practicable. In one particular case, staff development was seen to be playing an important part in sustaining a 'regional Higher Education Business Partnership (HEBP)'. In this context, the report observed that 'pragmatic management, effective staff development, and a demonstrable commitment to the support of students were combined' with success and that the way in which this had been achieved represented good practice [University of Teesside, paragraph 114]. In another case, an institution was seen to have worked with its partner to support staff development linked to the curriculum and to encourage and support research by the partner's staff leading to the institution's higher degrees. In another case, a report noted the contribution of peer observation of teaching by the partner's staff to their development while a further report commented on the general value for staff in both the institution and its partners of close contacts at subject level.

71 The audit reports identify a range of initiatives around staff development. One report, for example, described a programme of staff development activities undertaken with partner centres, including presentations on programme review and programme specifications. These were seen to contribute to the effectiveness of collaborative arrangements and identified as good practice [Goldsmiths College, University of London, paragraph 118]. Another report identified the staff development opportunities available to staff in partner institutions, noting the availability, without charge, of a postgraduate certificate to colleagues in partner institutions and annual briefings on matters related to quality assurance. These measures were also seen to represent good practice [University of Central England in Birmingham, paragraph 85 and 91].



72 An important aspect of staff support and development activities is that they can help awarding institutions to share their approaches to managing quality and safeguarding academic standards with staff and managers across their partnerships. Several reports noted that staff in partner organisations were aware of the requirements of the respective institutions regarding the academic standards to be attained to achieve their awards, and had a sense of being supported by the relevant institutions. Several reports viewed this aspect of staff development in collaborative arrangements as good practice [University of Leicester, paragraph 152; University of Teesside, paragraph 114; Buckinghamshire and Chilterns University College, paragraph 130]. Several reports mention that institutions are using their VLEs to make staff development opportunities available to tutors and others based with their partners.

73 One report noted that a qualification for advanced practice had been introduced by the institution for teaching staff in partner colleges. Mentoring arrangements had been provided to support staff in partner institutions studying and preparing for this qualification together with a full range of staff development opportunities. These arrangements were seen by the report to have contributed to the promotion of teaching and learning through induction and rewards 'in line with the institutional Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy' [University of Teesside, paragraph 89]. Instances of effective induction and training of local staff, and joint staff development were also noted in other reports.

74 Some audit reports note that the take up of staff support and development for partner institutions, even when provided, could be uneven or else could be strengthened in other ways to make it properly effective, particularly if provision of this nature was expected to develop further. In one case, while staff development for the institution's partners was provided in relation of the *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act*, the report recommended that consideration should be given to a wider programme of staff development. In another case, where initiatives to provide induction to support staff in partner colleges had not been well attended due to timing, the report recommended that the institution provide timely development for such staff, and monitor its effectiveness.

### Communications between collaborating partners

75 Institutional audit reports note many instances where close contacts between the awarding institution's staff and those of its partners facilitate sharing good practice and the benefit of frequent communications through formal channels and the day-to-day operation of programmes. One report noted that there were arrangements for the institution to hold regular discussions between senior managers on strategic matters. Other reports indicate the positive contributions institutions' link tutors at school, faculty, department and/or subject level make to communications between partners (see paragraph 24).

76 One institutional audit report highlighted the importance of awarding institutions making their partners aware not only of the details of their approaches to managing the quality of learning opportunities and academic standards in collaborative provision, but also of the rationales for the approaches adopted. In this case the

report noted the gap between the awarding institution's policies and procedures and what information about them it communicated to its partners. What was needed, the report suggested, was 'a systematic flow of information from the [institution] to the collaborating institution and, vice versa, about a range of matters, including quality assurance arrangements', to enable the partner institutions to be aware of the grounds for the policies and procedures the awarding institution had adopted.

77 In describing a number of an institution's arrangements for supporting its collaborative provision, including through work with its partners, one institutional audit report offered an appreciation of how frequent personal contacts between staff can cement collaborations. In this case good communications had been fostered by frequent personal contacts. There were 'formal scheduled meetings and frequent liaison on the day-to-day operation of programmes' and sharing good practice between the institution and its partners was 'a two way process'. Significantly, the report noted that in managing its collaborative provision, the institution's relationships with its partners appeared to be 'built on a foundation of mutuality and reciprocity of benefit'. Overall, the report found the sum of these arrangements represented good practice [City University, paragraph 160]

### **The findings of this paper and of its counterpart in the first series of *Outcomes...* papers compared**

78 There are many similarities between the findings of this paper and the corresponding paper in the first series of *Outcomes...* which reviewed the arrangements for the management of collaborative provision in institutional audit reports published between 2003 and November 2004. Broadly speaking there is a similar range of themes, though this paper covers slightly more material on overseas collaborative provision, and found the reports paying greater attention to widening participation and regional strategies. This paper has devoted less attention to the role of contact staff than its counterpart in the first series. Like that paper, this one has drawn attention to the way in which reports gave due prominence to institutions' arrangements for addressing the provision of learning opportunities in partner organisations and notes what appears to be a developing trend for institutions to give staff and students based with their partners access to their VLEs.

79 The corresponding paper in the first series concluded that 'the arrangements for institutional oversight of standards and quality in collaborative provision are for the most part soundly designed and operated...' and that 'most institutions have taken close account of the *Code of practice* and that equivalence in standards and quality between internal and collaborative provision is, in general, being secured' [Outcomes from institutional audit. Collaborative provision in the institutional audit reports. Series one, paragraph 48]. The present paper reaches broadly the same conclusions, and has found that in most cases institutions are discharging their responsibilities effectively.



### Conclusions

80 The institutional audit reports reviewed in this paper describe a wide range of ways in which institutions can work with partners and institutions with portfolios ranging from isolated instances to extensive consortia arrangements. The reports point to institutions taking the management of collaborative provision seriously, with many instances of genuine partnership that reach well beyond the formality of a commercial contract to collegiality around a shared purpose. Overseas collaborative activity, whilst not extensively covered in the reports, is generally well managed but with isolated instances where reports express concerns, for example when the language of assessment and instruction is in a language other than English or, exceptionally, where reliance has been placed on the partner's perceived reputation rather than institutional procedures.

81 As noted in the paper on the same topic in the first series of *Outcomes...*, awarding institutions draw extensively on the guidance contained in the *Code of practice*, particularly Section 2, and many build their documentation, policies and procedures directly on the *Code of practice* and its precepts. There was evidence too that awarding institutions have taken note of comments and recommendations made in earlier audit reports and changed their approach to the management of collaborative provision accordingly. The alignment of the approval, monitoring and review of collaborative activity with internal systems is extensive, but with most institutions having introduced some form of augmented scrutiny.

82 The audit reports identify a range of features of good practice, with these revolving around the contribution to widening participation; support for the student experience; support for students; support for staff through staff development; and evidence of procedural rigour being applied. This is not to say that reports were uncritical, with recommendations for further action covering various concerns, including the prominence given to strategic planning; alignment with elements of the Academic Infrastructure; the timing and adequacy of written agreements; and the codification and dissemination of institutional expectations.

## **Appendix 1 - The institutional audit reports**

### **Note**

In the period covered by these papers a number of institutions underwent a variety of scrutiny procedures for taught degree awarding powers, university title and research degree awarding powers. Reports of the individual scrutiny processes were provided to QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers, and its Board of Directors, and formed the basis for advice to the Privy Council on the applications made by the respective institutions.

In most cases the scrutiny processes also provided information which, in the form of a bespoke report, QAA accepted as the equivalent of an institutional audit report. Only those reports which conform to the general pattern of the institutional audit reports are included in the list below.

### **2004-05**

City University

Cranfield University

University of Hull

University of Leicester

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

University of Nottingham

The Queen's University of Belfast

University of Surrey

University of Ulster

Goldsmiths College, University of London

Queen Mary, University of London

Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (Royal Holloway, University of London)

University of London

University College London

Birkbeck College, University of London

Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (Imperial College London)

St George's Hospital Medical School

University of Derby

De Montfort University

University of Gloucestershire  
University of Hertfordshire  
Sheffield Hallam University  
University of Huddersfield  
Kingston University  
London Metropolitan University  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
Liverpool John Moores University  
University of Luton<sup>1</sup>  
University of Northumbria at Newcastle  
Oxford Brookes University  
University of Plymouth  
Staffordshire University  
London South Bank University  
University of Sunderland  
University of Teesside  
University of East London  
University of the West of England, Bristol  
University of Westminster  
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College<sup>2</sup>  
Canterbury Christ Church University College<sup>3</sup>  
University of Chester  
Liverpool Hope University  
University College Winchester<sup>4</sup>  
Henley Management College  
Harper Adams University College  
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama  
American InterContinental University - London

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<sup>1</sup> Now the University of Bedfordshire

<sup>2</sup> Now Buckinghamshire New University

<sup>3</sup> Now Canterbury Christ Church University

<sup>4</sup> Now the University of Winchester

2005-06

University of Manchester

Courtauld Institute of Art

Heythrop College

University of London External System

London School of Economics and Political Science

The University of Bolton

Thames Valley University

University of Central England in Birmingham<sup>5</sup>

University of Worcester

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Dartington College of Arts<sup>6</sup>

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

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<sup>5</sup> Now Birmingham City University

<sup>6</sup> Now part of the University College Falmouth

## **Appendix 2 - Reports on specialist institutions**

### **2004-05**

Birkbeck College, University of London

Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (Imperial College London)

St George's Hospital Medical School

Henley Management College

Harper Adams University College

Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

American InterContinental University - London

### **2005-06**

Courtauld Institute of Art

Heythrop College

University of London External System

London School of Economics and Political Science

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Dartington College of Arts

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

### **Appendix 3 - Titles of *Outcomes from institutional audit papers, Series 2***

In most cases, *Outcomes...* papers will be no longer than 20 sides of A4. Projected titles of *Outcomes...* papers in the second series are listed below in provisional order of publication.

The first series of papers can be found on QAA's website at [www.qaa.ac.uk/enhancement](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/enhancement)

#### **Title**

- Institutions' frameworks for managing quality and academic standards
- Progression and completion statistics
- Learning support resources (including virtual learning environments)
- Assessment of students
- Work-based and placement learning, and employability
- Programme monitoring arrangements
- Arrangements for international students
- Institutions' work with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- Recruitment and admission of students
- External examiners and their reports
- Collaborative provision in the institutional audit reports
- Institutions' arrangements to support widening participation and access to higher education
- Institutions' support for e-learning
- Specialist institutions
- Student representation and feedback
- Academic guidance, support and supervision, and personal support and guidance
- Staff support and development arrangements
- Subject benchmark statements
- The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Programme specifications
- Arrangements for combined, joint and multidisciplinary honours degrees programmes
- The adoption and use of learning outcomes

Validation and approval of new provision, and its periodic review

The self-evaluation document in institutional audit

The contribution of the student written submission to institutional audit

Institutions' intentions for enhancement

Series 2: concluding overview

## Appendix 4 - Methodology

The analysis of the institutional audit reports uses the headings set out in Annex H of the *Handbook for institutional audit: England (2002)* to subdivide the Summary, Main report and Findings sections of the institutional audit reports into broad areas. An example from the Main report is 'The institution's framework for managing quality and standards, including collaborative provision'.

For each published report, the text is taken from the report published on QAA's website and converted to plain text format. The resulting files are checked for accuracy and coded into sections following the template used to construct the institutional audit reports. In addition, the text of each report is tagged with information providing the date the report was published and some basic characteristics of the institution ('base data'). The reports were then introduced into a qualitative research software package, QSR N6®. The software provides a wide range of tools to support indexing and searching and allows features of interest to be coded for further investigation.

An audit team's judgements, its identification of features of good practice, and its recommendations appear at two points in an institutional audit report: the Summary and at the end of the Findings. It is only in the latter, however, that cross references to the paragraphs in the Main report are to be found, and it is here that the grounds for identifying a feature of good practice, offering a recommendation and making a judgement are set out. These cross references have been used to locate features of good practice and recommendations to the particular sections of the report to which they refer.

Individual *Outcomes...* papers are compiled by QAA staff and experienced institutional auditors. To assist in compiling the papers, reports produced by QSR N6® are made available to authors to provide a broad picture of the overall distribution of features of good practice and recommendations in particular areas, as seen by the audit teams.



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