London Institute of Technology (Lit_Lon Ltd)

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

September 2013

Key findings about London Institute of Technology (Lit_Lon Ltd)

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in September 2013, 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 programmes it offers on behalf of the Association of Business Practitioners, the Charted Institute of Management Accountants, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, the Association of Business Executives, Pearson and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

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

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

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

- the active engagement with students, which goes beyond the gathering of student feedback (paragraph 2.9)
- the thorough process, which involves students and the academic adviser, for reviewing all information (paragraph 3.4).

Recommendations

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

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

- clearly identify responsibilities for the management of academic standards (paragraph 1.2)
- develop its annual monitoring processes to consistently include consideration of progression data and internal and external quality reports (paragraph 1.5)
- include consideration of academic standards in all relevant committees' terms of reference (paragraph 1.6)
- review its approach to staff appraisal (paragraph 2.11).

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

- further engage with the Quality Code to enhance the student learning experience (paragraph 2.4)
- clarify its requirement for teaching qualifications of new academic staff and further develop continuing professional development for current staff (paragraph 2.7)
- introduce a timetabled tutorial system (paragraph 2.8)
- provide more consistent and comprehensive information for students (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London Institute of Technology (Lit_Lon Ltd) (the Institute), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Practitioners, the Charted Institute of Management Accountants, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, the Association of Business Executives, Pearson and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. The review was carried out by Dr Glenn Barr, Mrs Amanda Greason, Mr Peter Hymans (reviewers) and Dr Alun Thomas (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 partnership agreements, strategy and policy documents, minutes of meetings and a centre monitoring report supplied by the provider and awarding organisations, supported by meetings with staff and students during the review visit.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- the regulations of its awarding organisations.

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

The Institute was established originally as a training and research consultancy in 2001, and in 2008 expanded into the area of teaching and the provision of higher education. It is a not-for-profit organisation. The philosophy and spirit that underpins the Institute is outlined in the following vision: '[The Institute] is committed to making higher education accessible to all those with aspirations to improve their lives'. It has a diverse student community, which enhances the learning opportunities and cultural development of students. There are now 207 full-time students enrolled on nine different programmes with six different awarding organisations.

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

Association of Business Practitioners
- Level 7 Extended Diploma in Marketing Management (28)
- Association of Business Executives Level 7 Diploma in Business Computing (4)

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
- Professional Qualification (67)

Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality
- Level 5 Diploma in Tourism Management (11)
- Level 6 Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management (56)

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

Association of Business Executives
- Level 6 Diploma in Business Management (9)
- Level 5 Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management (1)

Pearson
- Higher National Diploma in Business (12)

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
- Professional Qualification (19)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The Institute has limited responsibility for academic standards, with responsibility for this retained by all its awarding organisations, subject to the Institute's participation in the assessment processes. Only Pearson shares the responsibility for curriculum development and the strategic development of higher education with the provider. All awarding organisations have, however, delegated to the Institute responsibility for the quality of the higher education it provides, staff development and collecting and acting upon student feedback. In all cases but the Association of Business Practitioners, where responsibility is shared, procedures for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy are the responsibility of the Institute.

Recent developments

The Institute was the subject of an annual monitoring visit in March 2013 when the monitoring team concluded that the Institute 'is making progress with implementing the action plan from the March 2012 Review of Educational Oversight but further improvement is required'. In particular the monitoring team found that the Institute had made insufficient progress in formalising the processes for peer observation and staff development and in working with external reference points.

The Institute has recently relocated to occupy part of the ground floor of an office block. The new site offers more space and better facilities than the previous campus. The Institute has grown significantly lately and has more than doubled its student numbers since March 2013.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the Institute were invited to present a submission to the review team. A student submission was received and students confirmed that they were responsible for all its content. A meeting was held with student representatives at both the briefing meeting and the review meeting. Much of the student submission was based around the results of the December 2012 student survey.

Detailed findings about London Institute of Technology (Lit_Lon Ltd)

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The Institute manages its responsibility for academic standards in accordance with its accreditation agreements with its awarding organisations. The College has no responsibility for the design of courses but is responsible for their operation.

1.2   The management structure of the Institute is effective in managing its responsibilities for academic standards. The Executive President has responsibility for reviewing educational activity but the job description for the role does not refer explicitly to the management of academic standards. The Head of Studies works with the Executive President in managing the education provision of the Institute but also has no direct reference to academic standards in the job description. It is **advisable** for the Institute to clearly identify responsibilities for management of academic standards.

1.3   Consisting of all the senior members of the Institute, the Board of Management is the governing body of the institution. The Board has the ultimate decision-making powers for both academic and resource issues and is responsible for the strategic direction of the Institute and development and implementation of its policies.

1.4   The Institute has formed an Advisory Board which, when it meets, provides useful guidance to the management team of the Institute. The Advisory Board consists of professional and external academic members but only meets annually, which may limit its effectiveness. Minutes of the meetings of both boards reveal that neither has considered matters relating to academic standards.

1.5   Although the senior team commented that they are responsible for the deliberative structures of the Institute and continually discuss their effectiveness informally, minutes of meetings show that the Institute does not systematically reflect on the effectiveness of its deliberative structures. One significant omission is annual monitoring. It is **advisable** for the Institute to develop its annual monitoring processes to consistently include consideration of progression data and internal and external quality reports.

1.6   The Institute holds monthly staff meetings which provide a good forum for review of activity and the dissemination of good practice. However, the minutes of the meetings show that these are largely restricted to operational matters and do not consider matters relating to academic standards, such as centre monitoring reports. It is **advisable** for the Institute to include consideration of academic standards in all relevant committees' terms of reference.

How effectively does the Institute make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.7   The Institute makes limited reference to external reference points in its management of academic standards. It is not responsible for the content of its curriculum and makes the judgement that syllabuses are referenced to appropriate benchmarks and professional standards by the awarding organisations. The Institute was not clear about its responsibilities to ensure that the courses are set in the context of higher education nationally.

1.8   Engagement of the Institute and its staff with professional communities is underdeveloped. The Institute is in the process of encouraging its teaching staff to engage with their professional communities. One member of staff has attended an awarding organisation event and others have joined the Institute for Learning. The Institute is considering ways in which it might engage with the Higher Education Academy but this has not yet taken place.

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

1.9   Student work from 2012-13 showed variability in assessment and internal verification practice. For the current session a new policy on internal verification includes verification of assignment instruments and systematic recording of activities.

1.10   There is no record of discussing external reports at monthly staff meetings or at senior level. In the recent level 7 Association of Business Practitioners centre monitoring report the external assessor suggests some improvements but is satisfied with the standards of the assessment. For Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and Association of Chartered Certified Accountants courses, which are externally examined, there are no external examiner reports.

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

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The Board of Management exercises effective oversight of matters including learning resources and student feedback. The monthly staff meetings, which student representatives attend, provide an effective forum for discussion and action on matters as they arise on a day-to-day basis. There are detailed minutes of all committee meetings and a process of action planning is undertaken and recorded at the end of each meeting.

2.2   The Institute has allocated specific responsibilities for aspects of learning opportunities to nominated post holders. The Dean of Administration, Head of Studies and Human Resources and a Student Support Officer support the Executive President who exercises strategic oversight. Job descriptions clearly indicate the extent of their responsibilities for a range of learning opportunities issues.

2.3   The Institute has an active approach to the review of its policies and procedures which guide the management of learning opportunities. The annual review of policies enables the Institute to consider their effectiveness and to make necessary revisions. Because some of the policies and procedures are relatively new and have yet to be fully implemented, the team was unable to assess their effectiveness. The Institute may wish to review these new policies and procedures, once implemented, to ensure their effectiveness.

How effectively does the Institute make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?

2.4   The Institute is in the early stages of engaging with and developing its understanding of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Since the

annual monitoring visit of March 2013, it has taken into account the reference points of its awarding organisations for managing and enhancing the learning opportunities available to students. This engagement has included some staff development sessions and some consideration of various sections of the Quality Code in the development and updating of its policies and procedures. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to further engage with the Quality Code to enhance the student learning experience.

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

2.5   The Institute's approach to learning and teaching has developed since the monitoring visit in March 2013. There is now an effective delivery strategy which focuses on lectures and student-centred activities. Regular tests provide formative feedback to students. Student feedback on the quality of teaching confirms their satisfaction with it. There has been some initial success with the Institute's recently-introduced peer learning concept, but it is not included in the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

2.6   The Institute has introduced peer observation of teaching since the monitoring visit with one observation having been undertaken. The peer observation process is designed to assure the Institute of the quality of teaching and the extent to which the Teaching and Learning Strategy is being implemented. It provides for the identification of support needs and staff development and dissemination of good practice. The Institute now needs to formalise how actions identified in the teaching observation process will feed into staff appraisal and how generic issues and good practice will be collated and addressed.

2.7   The Institute's policy on staff appointments does not clearly state the academic, professional or teaching qualifications it requires of potential academic staff. The Institute does, however, seek to appoint academic staff who have attained at least the academic level of the programme they are to deliver. Staff are highly qualified in terms of academic qualifications with most having higher degrees, but few have teaching qualifications. The Institute is considering a number of initiatives, including staff taking teaching qualifications or a relevant module of one of its awarding organisations. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to clarify its requirements for teaching qualifications of new academic staff and further develop continuing professional development for current staff.

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

2.8   Students value the support provided to them from the Institute's Student Support Unit which provides a comprehensive resource. The approach is mostly reactive with students able to make appointments as they require for both academic and pastoral needs. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to introduce a timetabled tutorial system.

2.9   The Institute affords its students ample opportunity to provide feedback and students are complimentary about their experience. Elected student representatives, who are fully briefed, attend the monthly staff meetings and therefore play a role in the progress of the Institute. For example, students have been involved in reviews of the website and proposed improvements to it which have been agreed. This active engagement with students, which goes beyond the gathering of student feedback, is **good practice**. An annual survey canvases student opinion on a range of topics. The outcomes are analysed although neither the Board of Management nor the monthly staff meetings consider the action required as a result of this analysis.

How effectively does the Institute develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?

2.10   The Institute's Staff Development Policy provides for internal and external development although to date nearly all such activities have been internal. Development events have taken place on topics including the Quality Code, peer learning and the new quality manual. It has developed a pro forma to seek feedback on the effectiveness of staff development events and is encouraged to implement this to evaluate staff development.

2.11   The Institute's current approach to staff appraisal does not meet the aim as set down in its Staff Development Policy. Staff undergo a teaching performance review for each module delivered and this provides for the identification of development needs and good practice. It does not, however, represent an annual opportunity to reflect upon overall performance nor to discuss the achievement and setting of objectives. The outcomes from the teaching performance reviews are not reported through the deliberative structure. It is **advisable** for the Institute to review its approach to staff appraisal.

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

2.12   Student feedback confirms their satisfaction with the provision of learning resources. Students particularly value their access to the online learning resources of the awarding organisations.

2.13   The resources provided by the Institute adequately support its students and the programmes being delivered. The Institute has recently relocated to new premises which represents a significant improvement on those previously used. This has led to an enhancement of the learning environment, particularly in terms of the provision of IT facilities.

2.14   In allocating resources, the Institute bases its decisions on acquisition and deployment on the needs of modules and courses. There is no resources strategy. The relevant awarding organisations provide a significant proportion of learning resource material to students.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

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3   Information about learning opportunities

How effectively does the Institute communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1   The Institute's website provides a wide range of publicly accessible information. This includes a brochure available for download, admission requirements, application procedures, prices and information about living in the area and studying at the Institute. The online application form and informative pre-arrival information contribute effectively to the Institute's admissions process. The website contains a social media link for students to communicate but the Institute does not have a social media policy to guide appropriate use. Students find the website accurate and helpful. The inclusion of a featured student profile

serves both to inform prospective students and as an incentive for current students to continue to engage with the Institute.

3.2 Information about the Institute is comprehensive, but detailed information about programmes is yet to be fully developed. A detailed student handbook and an induction pack are available on the intranet and in hard copy. These contain relevant policies, including complaints, appeals and unfair practice. Students access information on how well they have performed in their programmes through accessing personal achievement statistics on the website and through awarding organisation documents. The Institute has a timetable for creating programme specifications, and programme handbooks are under development. For example, the review of the draft HND Business Handbook by the Public Information Committee identifies the need for contextualised information beyond the descriptive material provided by the awarding organisation.

3.3 Information to support students' studies is inconsistent. Detailed information is available from the Institute's website and intranet, awarding organisation websites, and third party providers. The intranet is primarily a repository for information. The Institute is developing the intranet which is capable of being populated with a range of information to support student's learning, although most courses featured currently display sparse information. There are no minimum standards for lecturers to upload to the Institute's intranet. Students receive lesson plans approved by the Head of Studies in paper form but these are not always available on the intranet. The amount of information available to students varies by programme. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to provide more consistent and comprehensive information for students.

How effective are the Institution's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.4 A robust system assures that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The Public Information Committee meets monthly to review all information sources. The Board of Management and the Advisory Board consider the actions of the Public Information Committee. The information review process involves students and an external academic adviser. Students appreciate the changes made to the website as a result of their suggestions. The thorough process, which involves students and the academic adviser, for reviewing all information is **good practice**.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Action plan[3]

London Institute of Technology (Lit_Lon Ltd) action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 2013						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Institute:						
• the active engagement with students, which goes beyond the gathering of student feedback (paragraph 2.9)	Student engagement is promoted in systematic and formal manner An active group of students is engaged in promoting the quality teaching and learning process	Design a guiding document for student representatives Participation of student representatives in review team - the Public Information Committee, staff meeting, academic standard and quality enhancement committee	By January 2014 Monthly, quarterly (as structured) from January 2014	Head of studies Dean and Head of studies	Board of Management Board of Management	Terms of reference and guiding documents Meeting minutes and student representative reports, review reports and student feedback

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[3] The Institute 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 Institute's awarding organisations.

	Planning and implementation of actions are carried out based on the feedback gathered from students	Discussion on review reports/ minutes of meetings in Board of Management and Advisory Board meetings	Quarterly and Annually (as structured) from January 2014	Dean	Executive President	Meeting minutes
• the thorough process, which involves students and the academic adviser, for reviewing all information (paragraph 3.4).	Structured functioning of Public Information Committee	Design terms of reference and guiding document for the Public Information Committee	By March 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Terms of reference, guiding documents and meeting reports
	Accurate and reliable public information	Periodic review of public information by student representatives and Academic Adviser	Monthly and quarterly	Dean	Board of Management	Review and action taken reports
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the Institute to:						
• clearly identify responsibilities for the management of academic standards (paragraph 1.2)	Structured academic standards and quality enhancement process	Design terms of reference for the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee	By January 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Terms of reference and guiding documents

Maintain academic standards and enhance quality	Create the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee	By January 2014	Head of Studies		Mock test results and retention reports
	Review of academic standards and quality by committee	Six monthly from June 2014	The Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee	Board of Management	Review and implementation report
Responsibilities are ensured with clarity	Redefine job description of key personnel involved in academic standards and quality enhancement	By January 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	A new version of job description
	Adding agenda to review academic standards and quality enhancement in the Board of Management and the Advisory Board in their meetings	Quarterly and annually (as structured) from December 2013	Dean	Executive President	Meeting minutes

• develop its annual monitoring processes to consistently include consideration of progression data and internal and external quality reports (paragraph 1.5)	Effective educational-service delivery is promoted	Monitor progression data including internal and external quality reports	Six monthly starting from December 2013	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Meeting and planning reports
• include consideration of academic standards in all relevant committees' terms of reference (paragraph 1.6)	Structured meetings, review, follow-up, monitoring and implementation of academic standards and quality service delivery	Design terms of reference for committees - monthly staff meeting, Board of Management, Advisory Board, Public Information Committee, student representatives and Academic Standard and Quality Enhancement Committee	By December 2013	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Terms and reference and meeting minutes
• review its approach to staff appraisal (paragraph 2.11).	A reflective teaching and learning process	Design an annual staff performance appraisal	By December 2013	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Staff performance appraisal form
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the						

Institute to:						
• further engage with the UK Quality Code to enhance the student learning experience (paragraph 2.4)	An active student group engaged in teaching and learning process	Strengthen the existing Institute quality policy with reference to the Quality Code	By March 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Student annual feedback
	Interactive and reflective teaching and learning process	Revise teaching and learning strategy	By December 2013	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Strategy Document, exam success rates, peer observation report, student feedback survey
	Generic issues and good practice in teaching and learning are shared with all teaching staff	Teaching staff meeting	Quarterly from April 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Meeting minutes
• clarify its requirement for teaching qualifications of new academic staff and further develop continuing professional development for current staff (paragraph 2.7)	Professionally qualified staff members	Review the existing staff recruitment and staff development policy to add importance of professional qualification	By December 2013	Dean	Executive President	Revised policy documents
	Professionally qualified teaching staff	Get existing staff Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning	By June 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Qualification certificates

	Ongoing professional development of teaching staff	Sector, Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector and Internal Quality Assurance qualifications Promote continued professional development by associating with relevant organisations	By June 2014	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Memberships
• introduce a timetabled tutorial system (paragraph 2.8)	Students are supported throughout their courses	Design a weekly academic tutorial and pastoral support calendar	Starting from January 2014	Head of Studies and the Student Support Unit	Board of Management	Calendar
• provide more consistent and comprehensive information for students (paragraph 3.3).	Maintain academic standard	Designing a guiding document for teaching staff to upload standard number of materials on the portal	By December 2013	Head of Studies	Board of Management	Guiding document and uploaded documents

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/educational-oversight.

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 quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree-awarding powers, research degree-awarding powers or university title).

awarding organisation An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

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

good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

highly trusted sponsor An organisation that the UK Government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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 study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

learning outcomes 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 reviews and reports.

programme (of study) An approved course of study that 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 (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-**awarding bodies** or **awarding organisations**. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation 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').

quality See **academic quality**.

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

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.

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 standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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