Tech Music Schools Ltd

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

November 2013

Key findings about Tech Music Schools Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in November 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 University of West London.

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

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 strong and effective collaboration with the awarding body
  (paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3)
- the integrated approach to business and academic decision-making (paragraph 2.5)
- the diverse range of student-focused support services (paragraph 2.12)
- the wide-ranging external links with the music industry (paragraphs 1.2, 2.4, 2.15 and 2.21).

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:

- ensure that the internal verification process is consistent across all programmes (paragraph 1.8).

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

- make external examiner reports available to all students (paragraph 2.9).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](QAA) at Tech Music Schools Ltd (the School), 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 University of West London (the University). The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Dr Martin Lockett, Mr Brian Whitehead (reviewers) and Dr Monika Ruthe (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [_Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook_](2).[2] Evidence in support of the review included the self-evaluation and supporting documentation such as policies and procedures, external examiner and annual monitoring reports, minutes of committee meetings, as well as the student written submission and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- _The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland_ (FHEQ)
- University of West London Collaborative Handbook.

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

The School is a provider of popular music education and specialises in music performance, creative musicianship, music production, songwriting and music business. It is based in Effie Road in Fulham, London. The School aims to train musicians for a career in the music industry as session musicians, solo artists, producers, songwriters and entrepreneurs.

The School was originally established 1983 as a drum and percussion school. With the business expanding three new schools specialising in vocals, guitar and bass were included. The four schools were brought together as Tech Music Schools in 2007. In 2010 Tech Music Schools was acquired by the Brighton Institute of Modern Music (BIMM) Group and became a subsidiary company (Tech Music Schools Ltd) of the BIMM Group's holding company. In 2010 Tech Music Schools was rebranded as Tech Music School. In January 2013, it added London to its name and became known as Tech Music School London.

The School has a long standing academic partnership with The University of West London and offers a number of validated programmes at undergraduate level as well as one jointly delivered postgraduate programme. After a one year validation relationship with Bath Spa University the academic partnership with The University of West London was re-established in 2011.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body:

The University of West London

- BMus (Hons) Popular Music Performance (406)

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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

- BMus (Hons) Popular Music Performance with Foundation Year (124)
- BA (Hons) Creative Musicianship (91)
- BA (Hons) Music Production (149)
- BA (Hons) Songwriting (64)
- BA (Hons) Music Business (47)
- MMus Popular Music Performance (4).

The provider's stated responsibilities

The School's responsibilities in relation to undergraduate provision validated by the University are clearly defined in schedule one of the signed partnership agreement. For these awards, the School is responsible for all aspects of programme management. Accordingly, it is responsible for curriculum development, programme delivery, assessment including setting and marking of assessment and feedback to students, student support, monitoring of teaching quality, staff development and the provision of programme and module information. Student recruitment and admissions, programme monitoring and provision of learning resources are shared responsibilities with the University. Responsibilities of each party for postgraduate provision are outlined in schedule two. For this provision the School is responsible for the delivery of a small number of modules.

Recent developments

Since its acquisition by the BIMM group in 2010, the School has undergone a significant review and expansion of its academic portfolio, with three new undergraduate programmes validated by the University launched in 2012, followed by one more in 2013. Students registered on programmes previously validated by Bath Spa University have been transferred to The University of West London programmes with approval by the latter's Accreditation Committee.

Extensive investment by the BIMM group enabled the School to relocate to new and purpose configured premises in Fulham in September 2013. Student numbers have grown considerably in the last year due to the expansion of the academic portfolio and the development of the new premises.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the School were invited to present a submission to the review team. Student views were gathered in a newsletter with contributions from student representatives and individuals reporting on their own experiences. Students met the team and the student submission, and the meetings, provided valuable input into the review process.

Detailed findings about Tech Music Schools Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The School provides effective oversight of its responsibilities for the management of academic standards on behalf of its awarding body. The Head of Higher Education and the programme leaders have a close and forward-looking working relationship with University link tutors to ensure that, during a period of rapid rise in student numbers, delegated responsibilities are fulfilled. Quality assurance systems are embedded in the Quality Cycle and actions are addressed through the Quality Enhancement Plan 2013-14. The Quality Cycle responds to the detailed guidance in the University's Collaborative Handbook for the management of academic standards. The School presents an annual report to the University Partnership Review Meeting which monitors the previous academic year, and is subject to five-yearly periodic review by the University. The University has also undertaken a recent successful audit of the School, which concluded that 'academic standards are secure'.

1.2 The School has an effective and coherent committee structure. The Senior Executive Committee manages overarching strategic and operational planning. The Higher Education Management Group Subcommittee plays a key role in the academic management of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This group has also been responsible for managing the development and completion of the action plan following the November 2012 review report. There has been commendable progress with the action plan, which is monitored by the Academic Board. The Board of Studies for each programme receive formal feedback through student representatives, and report to Academic Board on all aspects relating to academic standards. External stakeholders and industry practitioners make valued contributions to ensuring the currency and relevance of curriculum delivery.

1.3 Boards of studies are responsible for annual programme monitoring. Annual reports are submitted to the University, including responses by programme leaders to external examiners' reports. Extensive evaluation of student performance is included in programme reports, and builds on the good practice identified in the previous review report. Oversight of programme monitoring by the Academic Board, which includes student members, ensures sound management of academic standards and enhances ongoing programme development. The School's strong and effective collaboration with the awarding body is **good practice**.

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

1.4 The School makes appropriate use of FHEQ through the University's requirements for programme specifications including level descriptors, and the use of subject benchmark statements for music and business. Curriculum design and development for new programmes is overseen by the Head of Higher Education and programme leaders, and approved by the Academic Board. The programme approval process, which is fully aligned with the Quality Code, *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, *Chapter A4: Approval and review*, is used successfully to provide awards which respond to student and stakeholder interests in the music industry. Postgraduate teaching and assessment is currently limited to a small number of modules within the structure of a joint programme. The School plans to build on its shared expertise with the University in delivering the programme, with the BMus (Hons) Popular Music Performance providing a potential progression route for its students.

1.5   A review of policies and procedures conducted in response to the desirable recommendation from the last review has enhanced staff awareness of the Quality Code. The completed mapping document is comprehensive, supports the internal management of academic standards and ensures alignment with those of the awarding body. Staff identified a number of changes as a result, for example in the running of Examination Boards and a greater focus on the dissemination of best practice across departments. The status of the action plan derived from the mapping exercise is a standing item for Academic Board and the Higher Education Management Group.

1.6   The last review recommended as advisable that the School should 'develop a rigorous procedure for the accreditation of prior learning'. The School's new Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy provides clear and detailed guidance to admissions staff and programme leaders. The policy is being monitored extensively, including analysis of applications in annual programme reviews, and by the University Accreditation Committee.

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

1.7   The School has delegated responsibilities for assessment, with external examining by external examiners appointed by the awarding body to oversee academic standards. All summative assessments require external examiners' approval. There is an explicit marking, double-marking and internal moderation policy, approved by the University as part of programme validation. The authenticity of student work is checked by plagiarism-detection software. Suspected academic malpractice is investigated and reported. Students confirm that they receive written and verbal guidance on referencing and avoidance of plagiarism, and submit work following a software check.

1.8   The results of assessments are scrutinised at module and programme level by the Module Assessment boards and the Progress and Awards boards respectively. The recent University centre audit report noted that the School prepares thoroughly for assessment boards. Final University Examination Boards are chaired by a senior member of staff of the London College of Music (a faculty of the University) to confirm awards. External examiners' reports are used effectively to support the maintenance of academic standards through the development of action plans. Programme leaders ensure that action plans are completed, recorded in annual monitoring reports, and that external examiners are provided with appropriate written responses. However, scrutiny of a sample of student assessments confirmed some inconsistencies in marking related to grade boundaries in one newly launched programme. It is **advisable** for the School to ensure that the internal verification process is consistent across all programmes.

> 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 body.

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The School has a clear structure for the management and enhancement of learning opportunities in its higher education provision. As outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3, this includes business and academically focused bodies with complementary roles, as well as the role of Head of Higher Education. The School's Quality Cycle documents relevant activities for the academic year and provides a framework for quality assurance. It links

programme level activity with the oversight and the school-wide view of the boards of studies and the Academic Board. The Quality Enhancement Plan summarises key enhancement initiatives and responsibilities.

2.2   Business focused bodies consider the quality of learning opportunities as an integral part of strategy and implementation. The Executive Management Team develops the overall strategy for the School including business consideration of new programmes, learning facilities and resources. The Higher Education Management Group works as an effective mechanism for identifying and resolving operational issues in the School's higher education provision.

2.3   The Academic Board has overall academic responsibility for policy and oversight in relation to learning opportunities. Together with the boards of studies, it takes a proactive role in relation to enhancement. The wide-ranging remit of the Academic Board has led the School to start considering further evolution of this structure as it expands student numbers and the range of higher education provision.

2.4   A major development over the last year has been the move to new premises in order to enhance student learning opportunities. This move has expanded the learning facilities and brought them together into a single building. Students confirm the improvement that has been made possible by the new facilities. Staff were involved in the final design of the facilities through a formal group and informal mechanisms. External music industry sponsorship has been obtained to equip learning facilities to a high standard.

2.5   The School is developing plans for further growth in student numbers that will demand more facilities and expansion of staff and other resources. The approach continues to integrate business planning with maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities, including extension of opening hours in line with student demand and potential new facilities. The School also intends to expand its postgraduate provision and is anticipating further demand in resources associated with master's level programmes. There is evidence of proactive business and academic planning for such areas as academic staff, learning resources, assessment and student support. The School's integrated approach to business and academic decision-making to support growth and enhance learning opportunities is **good practice**.

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

2.6   The School makes direct and indirect use of external reference points.
The relationship with the University ensures that appropriate reference points are used as set out in paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6.

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

2.7   The School uses a range of management information to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, in particular information on student achievement and progression. The National Student Survey and module feedback also provide information which is monitored carefully. It is intended that this will be extended to include graduate information from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey.

2.8   Annual monitoring is used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and stimulate enhancement. Annual Programme reports demonstrate critical reflection on programmes, combined with a forward-looking approach to improvement. There is also an annual overview report on teaching and learning.

2.9   External examiner reports are considered systematically by the boards of studies and the Academic Board, as well as in Annual Programme reports. While student representatives see external examiner reports in meetings they have not been made available to all students, although this is being considered. It would be **desirable** for the School to make external examiner reports available to all students.

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

2.10   Feedback to students on assessed work is generally prompt and appropriate. Students report that assessment feedback is normally returned within the 15-day target set by the School and is useful in improving future performance. They also note that this has been an area of enhancement over the past two years. Sample scrutiny of assessed work confirms the generally good provision of feedback, though there are inconsistencies across modules on a minority of programmes. The School is aware of such issues and has taken action where these have been identified. Students are aware of how to raise concerns and pursue academic appeals.

2.11   The School provides a range of extra-curricular activities which enhance the learning opportunities available to students. These include master classes, an in-house record label, an artist in residence and public performance opportunities with future plans, including an internet radio station and more external visits. Students also have access to the University's events.

2.12   The School provides a range of student support and counselling services which have been enhanced considerably since the last review. Annual student support and counselling reports indicate a reflective evaluation of the volume and quality for these services. English language support has also been introduced together with enhancement of performance psychology and health support, as well as innovative new services such as the Alexander Technique to reduce muscular and mental tension. The School has increased the staffing of student support with a recent appointment and intends to increase it further in the future. Potentially 'at risk' students likely to need more in-depth support are identified early by academic and student support areas together working together. The tutorial system provides an effective mechanism for providing academic support on a personal basis. The diverse range of student-focused support services is **good practice**.

2.13   Personal development and career support is provided through the curriculum and central School services. In practice, students see tutors and less formal contacts as more effective than the formal approach. The School is enhancing provision in this area, linking with the music industry and alumni. Work placements are being encouraged, with one recently introduced programme offering these to all students.

2.14   Student representation is focused on academic issues and builds from programme level through the Board of Studies to the Academic Board. Programme level student representatives meet formally and informally with module and programme leaders, as well as student support staff. Students and staff confirm that student feedback is considered seriously and that the School is responsive to issues raised by students. The channels for feedback include representatives, module surveys and informal communication. While the system of academic student representation is strong, there is no students' union or equivalent. Students and senior management see this as an area for a future initiative.

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

2.15   The School uses an appropriate mix of core and adjunct faculty to deliver its programmes. Given its portfolio, the use of practising musicians as part-time teachers is

seen as beneficial by students. At the same time, there is a growing core of faculty who are familiar with their subject area, the music industry and the requirements of UK higher education. The School has effective arrangements for the selection, induction and support of staff, including adjunct faculty. Internal communication regarding the direction of the School is good, including its strategic objectives.

2.16   The School is evolving a more systematic approach to staff development. While there is a high-level staff development policy, the strategy for staff development has been less clear and activity been based on individual requests by members of staff. A range of staff development activities are undertaken both internally and with the University. The School intends to introduce a more systematic programme including departmental planning and a music-specific teaching and learning qualification.

2.17   Observation of teaching is being embedded in the operation of the School, though to date its implementation has been uneven. There are clear policies on teaching observation and a plan to extend its coverage in the current year. Part-time staff are paid when they undertake teaching observation. Students confirm that action had been taken when concerns were raised about specific issues of teaching quality.

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

2.18   Students have access to both School and the University's resources. While practice facilities are good, library resources within the School are limited and access to University resources is an important factor. At the time of the review, there were delays in providing access rights to University resources. The School and the University are aware of the issues and confirmed their intention to change the approach for the next academic year.

2.19   Another development since the last review has been the enhancement of the tutorial system. Tutorials have been extended from 20 to 30 minutes to increase their effectiveness and space made in timetabling to ensure accessibility. Students see these changes as positive. The School and students recognise the need to improve the booking system and the School plans to make improvements over the next few months.

2.20   The School encourages applications from disabled students and adjusts its provision to reflect their needs. Improved provision for the physically disabled is a feature of the new facilities. Special assessment arrangements can be made where required, for example, dyslexia and sight difficulties.

2.21   The School's links with the external music industry cover many aspects contributing to the quality of learning opportunities, including faculty with extensive industry experience, a curriculum reflecting industry needs and developments, a variety of extra-curricular activity and music industry sponsorship of facilities. Overall the School's wide-ranging external links with the music industry is **good practice**.

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

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3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 There is evidence of continued improvement in the provision of information for potential and current students, and other stakeholders. The School's website forms the principal platform for the publication of information, supported by the prospectus. Information is provided about the facilities and academic provision, including summaries of the content of each programme of study, entry criteria, student support, and guidance on application. Students confirm that typically the website is initially the primary source of information.

3.2 Once enrolled, students are provided with more detailed information. The School handbook, accessible via the virtual learning environment (VLE), supplies information about the range of facilities and processes. Programme handbooks, also accessible via the VLE, give an overview of academic and music related arrangements including programme specifications and assessment briefs. Programme books provide information on schemes of work for each module of study and, for the first year, also a set of course notes.

3.3 There is growing use of the School's VLE, supported by internal training for staff. The School has appropriately addressed the two advisable recommendations from the last review to review the policy for, and monitor the use of, the VLE and to develop a more formal mechanism for updating it. Following the recommendations by staff and student focus groups, the School has made substantial improvements to the VLE and provided guidance on its use. Staff and students confirm that these recent changes have resulted in better access to information and greatly improved their ability to communicate and interact with each other. Examples include the publishing of formal school information, lesson plans, presentations, reminders and alerts of changes or forthcoming events, and records of class activities.

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

3.4 The School has effective processes for ensuring that the information it has responsibility for is accurate and complete. The BIMM group has centralised the marketing function across their institutions, although the information for the website and prospectus is produced and checked by the School.

3.5 The School developed a virtual learning environment policy, recently approved by Academic Board. Ultimate responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of information on the system lies with the Principal, and with senior managers each having specific areas of responsibility. Information on policies and procedures is overseen by the Head of Academic Administration and Student Support; student fees, application and enrolment processes by the Head of Admissions; and information on the School's programmes by the Head of Higher Education. In addition to these specific individual responsibilities, the Higher Education Management Group also takes an active role in ensuring the accuracy, completeness and usefulness of the system. Proposed improvements to communications are included in the Quality Enhancement Plan.

3.6 Teaching staff are able to update information by uploading documents or providing a link to wider information relating to their programmes. Module leaders are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of such information.

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]

Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
Tech Music Schools Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of November 2013						
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the School:						
• the strong and effective collaboration with the awarding body (paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3)	Further strengthen inter-institutional links at operational levels	Ensure direct communication links are established at both Head of Education/Head of Subject and programme leader/link tutor level	April 2014	Head of Higher Education	Academic Board Senior Executive Committee	Academic Board minutes Senior Executive Committee minutes Manifest of contacts
	Monitor student satisfaction with the awarding body via student rep meetings and focus groups	Include discussion of the role of the awarding body as a standing item on student rep meeting agendas	April 2014, then ongoing	Head of Student Support	Board of Studies	Board of Studies minutes Student Representative Meetings minutes
	Develop opportunities for further student and staff	Liaise with Head of Subject and the University	April 2014, then ongoing	Head of Higher Education in	School Executive	Senior Executive Committee

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[3] The School 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 School's awarding body.

	collaborations	students' union to develop a rolling programme of collaborative activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) and promote to students via a variety of internal communication channels as appropriate		liaison with programme leaders	Committee	minutes Promotional materials
• the integrated approach to business and academic decision-making (paragraph 2.5)	Quality Cycle embedded in both academic and operational contexts	Quality Cycle planner to inform scheduling, agenda and outputs of both academic and operational committees	March 2014, then ongoing	Head of Higher Education	Academic Board Senior Executive Committee Higher Education Management Group	Academic Board minutes Senior Executive Committee minutes Higher Education Management Group minutes
	Implement cross-committee reporting	Academic Board minutes to be circulated to Senior Executive Committee for noting; Senior Executive Committee minutes to be circulated to Academic Board for noting	March 2014, then ongoing	Principal	Academic Board Senior Executive Committee	Academic Board minutes Senior Executive Committee minutes
• the diverse range of student-focused support services (paragraph 2.12)	Expand English language support for non-UK native students	Appoint additional student support specialists in the areas of English language support and learning support and promote to students via a variety of internal communication channels	September 2014	Head of Student Support	Academic Board School Executive Committee	Academic Board minutes Senior Executive Committee minutes Promotional

						materials
	Increase Alexander Technique provision to promote student well-being and injury prevention	Appoint additional Alexander Technique specialists and promote to students via a variety of internal communication channels	September 2014	Head of Student Support	Academic Board

School Executive Committee | Academic Board minutes

Senior Executive Committee minutes

Promotional materials |
| | Develop and implement any revisions to the academic tutorial system arising from the annual review of the current system | Conduct annual review of tutorial system and agree any revisions as appropriate based on management information | September 2014 | Head of Student Support and Head of Higher Education | Academic Board

School Executive Committee | Academic Board minutes

Senior Executive Committee minutes

Revised academic tutorial policy and procedure in School Handbook as well as results of annual student satisfaction surveys |
| | Monitor student satisfaction with student support services through Student Representative Meetings, focus groups and annual student satisfaction | Continue to include discussion of student support services provision as a standing item on Student Representative Meeting agendas | Ongoing | Head of Student Support | Academic Board

School Executive Committee | Academic Board minutes

Senior Executive Committee minutes |

		questionnaire				Student Representative Meetings minutes
		Implement an annual student support satisfaction survey	May 2014, then annually	Head of Student Support	Academic Board School Executive Committee	Academic Board minutes Senior Executive Committee minutes Results of student support annual survey
• the wide-ranging external links with the music industry (paragraph 1.2, 2.4, 2.15 and 2.21).	Implement a BIMM Group-wide industrial liaison working party to facilitate the sharing of good practice and the development of group-wide projects including national touring and inter-institutional collaboration	Convene working party to develop a rolling programme of group-wide activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) and promote to student body via a variety of internal communication channels as appropriate	August, 2014	Head of Music Business and Industry Liaison	School Executive Committee	Senior Executive Committee minutes Promotional materials
	Implement an annual series of live music industry showcases to generate further exposure for TMS students in the wider industry	Commission events and promote to student body and industry via a variety of internal and external communication channels as appropriate	Academic year 2013-14, then ongoing	Head of Music Business and Industry Liaison	School Executive Committee	Senior Executive Committee minutes Promotional materials
	Implement an artist development programme	Commission events and promote to student body	Academic year 2013-	Head of Music Business and	School Executive	Senior Executive Committee

	featuring regular jobs market workshops, industry showcases and Q&A surgeries	via a variety of internal communication channels as appropriate	14, then ongoing	Industry Liaison	Committee	minutes Promotional materials
Advisable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date(s)**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the School to:						
• ensure that the internal verification process is consistent across all programmes (paragraph 1.8).	Moderation process informed by key data sets	Review and revise moderation policy and procedure to incorporate key data sets including pass rate, average mark and bell curve	February 2014	Head of Higher Education	Academic Board	Revised policy and procedure in place, evidenced by Academic Board minutes
		Review and revise moderation output form to ensure congruence with revised policy	February 2014	Head of Higher Education	Academic Board	Revised output form in place, evidenced by Academic Board minutes
	Moderation process consistent across all programmes	Ensure all moderation is undertaken by programme leaders following training in revised policy and procedure	March 2014	Head of Higher Education	Higher Education Management Group	Higher Education Management Group minutes
Desirable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date/s**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the						

School to:						
• make external examiner reports available to all students (paragraph 2.9).	Students able to access external examiner reports and programme leaders' responses via the virtual learning environment	Notify students of intention to publish external examiners reports via the virtual learning environment through internal communication channels and at Board of Studies and Academic Board	April 2014	Head of Higher Education	Academic Board and Board of Studies	Academic Board Minutes Board of Studies Minutes Communication documents
		Publish academic year 2012-13 reports and programme leader responses on the virtual learning environment	April 2014	Head of Higher Education		Academic year 2012-13 reports published on the virtual learning environment
		Publish academic year 2013-14 reports and programme leader responses on the virtual learning environment	September 2014	Head of Higher Education		Academic year 2013-14 reports published on the virtual learning environment
		Discuss reports and programme leader responses at Academic Board #1 each year	Ongoing	Programme leaders		Academic Board minutes

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/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 .

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 immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

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.

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**.