

# The London Academy of Management and Business Limited

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

January 2014

## **Key findings about The London Academy of Management and Business Limited**

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in January 2014, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (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 ATHE Ltd.

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

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the 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 thorough use, understanding and embedding of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 1.6)
- the extensive support for a wide range of staff development (paragraph 2.12).

#### 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:

- implement a robust and consistent process for collecting, analysing and evaluating data on student performance (paragraph 1.4)
- ensure that internal verification of assessed work is more rigorously undertaken, and that students are provided with fuller developmental feedback (paragraph 2.9).

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

• further develop the opportunities for industry engagement and provide more focused careers guidance (paragraph 2.11).

### **About this report**

This report presents the findings of the Review for Educational Oversight¹ (REO) conducted by QAA at The London Academy of Management and Business Limited (the Academy), 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 ATHE Ltd (The Management Awarding Organisation). The review was carried out by Dr Julie Andreshak-Behrman and Dr Glenn Barr (reviewers) and Mr Simon Ives (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the <u>Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook</u>.<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding organisation; meetings with staff, students and employers; and reports of reviews by QAA.

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

- the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)
- The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)
- the requirements of the awarding organisation
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code).

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

The Academy is a registered company and recruited its first intake of students in November 2012. It received a UK Border Agency Tier 4 highly trusted licence in December 2012. The College's mission is to be a leading provider of affordable high-quality higher education, offering educational programmes for career development. Currently there is a small number of teaching and administrative staff, many of whom work part-time. At present, because of the small number of students some staff undertake multiple roles within the Academy. The strategic plan of the Academy is to expand its student body, management team and administrative structures to a level required by the standards of the accreditations being pursued.

The Academy has students enrolled on five programmes in partnership with one awarding organisation. The total number of full-time students enrolled on the programmes under review in 2013-14 is 162.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath its awarding organisation, with the number of students in brackets:

#### **ATHE Ltd**

- Extended Diploma in Management level 5 (39)
- Diploma in Management level 6 (45)
- Diploma in Strategic Management level 7 (43)
- Diploma in Healthcare Management level 6 (9)
- Diploma in Healthcare Management level 7 (26)

www.gaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight

<sup>2</sup> www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

### The Academy's stated responsibilities

The Academy is currently delivering a range of programmes at level 5-7 on the QCF in partnership with one awarding organisation, ATHE Ltd (The Management Awarding Organisation). Its responsibilities are to develop students' skills to meet the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the programmes offered. The Academy is responsible for admissions, programme delivery, marking of assessed work, providing feedback to students on their work, responding to student feedback and all aspects of internal quality assurance and review.

### **Recent developments**

The Academy has been under new ownership and management since February 2013, and a new Principal took up post in March 2013. In July 2013 the Academy gained approval from Pearson to deliver HND Business and the level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership. The Academy has deferred recruitment to these programmes until spring 2014.

In December 2013 the Academy moved its premises from central London to north-west London in order to provide additional accommodation and resources. However, following storm damage caused to the new premises at Christmas 2013 the Academy took urgent action to relocate, and secured appropriately equipped premises in Harrow and moved in January 2014 prior to the start of the new term.

#### Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on programmes at the Academy were invited to present a submission to the review team. Student representatives prepared the submission based on information gathered through questionnaires completed by students enrolled on all five programmes. Comments from this survey informed the content of the student submission, which was approved by the Academy's newly formed Students' Union. The submission provided a helpful starting point for the team. Students met reviewers at the preparatory meeting and during the review visit. The team found their views helpful in informing their discussions and in gaining a clear understanding of the student learning experience.

## Detailed findings about the London Academy of Management and Business Limited

#### 1 Academic standards

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

- 1.1 The Academy manages its responsibility for academic standards effectively, in accordance with its accreditation agreement. The Academy is clear about the responsibilities it has for the operation of the programmes developed by its awarding organisation. Ultimate responsibility for managing academic standards rests with the Principal who delegates operational matters to the Head of Academic Governance, a role currently within the remit of the Director of Studies. Job descriptions for the roles of Principal and Director of Academic Governance are detailed, and refer explicitly to their responsibilities for the management of academic standards, which are well understood.
- 1.2 A well-defined committee structure oversees the management of academic standards. The Executive Committee, consisting of the Principal and directors, sets strategic direction. The main deliberative body is the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. This is responsible for monitoring and reviewing standards and quality of provision in line with awarding organisation requirements, and the Expectations of the Quality Code. Membership of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee is broad, including senior staff, the programme leader and teaching staff. There is currently no requirement for student representation. The Committee meets regularly following a standard agenda. Matters related to academic standards are given appropriate consideration primarily through discussion of Assessment Board and other committee minutes, although these are sometimes brief. Named staff are identified with responsibility for ensuring that actions are addressed. The Assessment Board, introduced following a recommendation from the 2012 Review for Educational Oversight, is effective in reviewing performance at unit level but has not yet been through a full review cycle.
- 1.3 There is a wide range of quality assurance policies and procedures which underpin the management of standards and quality. These are detailed in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook which provides a thorough and overarching guide for staff. It includes terms of reference for the key committees, and information on roles and responsibilities for assuring academic standards. Processes for annual monitoring are clear, although programmes have yet to complete a full cycle for review.
- 1.4 Annual reviews for 2012-13 are in draft form awaiting final completion of the programmes, and a full evaluation has not yet taken place. A detailed annual review template encourages evaluative responses from programme teams, including the consideration and response to external reports and student progression data. Although the templates encourage forward planning they do not require a formal action plan for future improvement. Some data is collected and used at programme level on student attendance, retention and progression, but this has yet to be analysed at Academy level. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee does not consider existing data, discuss trends or set targets as part of its review of standards and quality. It is **advisable** for the Academy to implement a robust and consistent process for collecting, analysing and evaluating data on student performance.

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

- 1.5 Staff have a sound understanding of external reference points and use these effectively in the management of academic standards. This was considered to be an area of good practice in the 2012 Review for Educational Oversight, and has been further developed. Both academic and support staff understand, and are able to articulate, how these inform the maintenance of academic standards. A series of policies, including those for assessment, appeals and academic misconduct, have been introduced to meet these requirements and those of the Quality Code. The Principal has recently initiated a mapping of the Expectations of the Quality Code against the Academy's policies. Further work is in progress with an external consultant to review all policies and procedures to ensure these are fully referenced against all sections of the Quality Code.
- 1.6 As part of the accreditation process, the Academy demonstrates that it is effective in applying policies and procedures which meet the expectations of the awarding organisation. The awarding organisation provides programme specifications and intended learning outcomes. These reflect subject benchmark statements and are in line with the requirements of the QCF. Staff and students are able to characterise clearly the differences in levels of study in accordance with the QCF and the FHEQ. The thorough use, understanding and embedding of the Quality Code is **good practice**.

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

- 1.7 The Academy has been effective in addressing the areas of good practice and many of the recommendations for improvement following the Review for Educational Oversight in December 2012. The Academy has built on good practice and fully addressed a number of recommendations. Where work is still ongoing, the Academy has clear plans to ensure it is embedding and evaluating the previous recommendations.
- 1.8 There are comprehensive processes for assessment and internal verification. Staff understand their responsibilities for setting and marking assignments for the awarding organisation, and are fully conversant with the requirements. The Academy is responsible for first and second marking of assessments. The policy on internal verification includes a systematic process for verification of assignment briefs. This was considered good practice by the previous review and continues to work well. The Academy has been proactive in working with the awarding organisation to seek approval to design their own assignments, in order to offer a greater variety of assessment types and to more closely meet the learning styles of the students.
- 1.9 The Academy's assessment policy, enhanced since the Review for Educational Oversight in 2012, provides a sound basis for fair assessment and feedback. The policy has clear requirements for assessment schedules, timescales and feedback to students. It also ensures that assessments are set against intended learning outcomes. Student work from 2013 has yet to be reviewed by external examiners appointed by the awarding organisation. The Academy assures the validity of student work through close monitoring of draft assignments and the use of an authenticity statement, and has plans to introduce plagiarism-detection software. Students view assessment processes, carried out according to stated procedures, as fair but rigorously undertaken.
- 1.10 The Academy has been forward-looking in introducing clear processes for considering external examiners' comments. The Academy is yet to go through the process of external examination, and no reports have yet been considered. However, there is a detailed procedure for addressing external examiners' reports through the programme annual

monitoring process. These will also be considered at the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee with responses and actions identified.

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 organisation.

#### 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The Academy's responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4. Staff understand their responsibilities to the awarding organisation, and implement them appropriately. Responsibility for oversight of learning and teaching rests with the Director of Studies. Assignment briefs, lesson plans and examinations are undertaken in accordance with the awarding organisation's framework and templates. Programme specifications are provided by the awarding organisation and students and staff are conversant with these. There is a range of policies and procedures developed by the Academy which support oversight of learning opportunities. These include appropriate systems to assure quality, such as programme monitoring and review, internal verification, student feedback, peer observations, staff appraisal and development. The Course Committee meets regularly to review students' progress and consider feedback.

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

2.2 The Academy's use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities reflects those in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6. Staff are fluent in their understanding and use of the Quality Code, and students also have an awareness of its Expectations. Training, for both staff and students, in relation to the Quality Code has recently been provided by an external consultant. There has been recent progress in developing learning and teaching policies and processes against the relevant chapters of the Quality Code, for example *Chapter B3: Teaching and learning* and *Chapter B5: Student engagement*. Staff confirmed that the recent introduction of a Students' Union along with the design of the job description for the new post of Head of Student Support Services demonstrate engagement with the Expectations of the Quality Code.

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

- 2.3 The Academy's comprehensive Teaching and Learning Policy outlines the overarching expectations. These requirements are generally understood and adhered to by managers and staff, who meet regularly to discuss emerging issues. The Academy has a well-embedded process for the peer observation of teaching. Teaching staff participate in peer observations which lead to informed discussion between participants. Staff who are observed reflect on the outcomes, and recognise possibilities for informally sharing good practice. Senior managers have plans to engage an external consultant to undertake more formal management teaching observations.
- 2.4 Feedback is provided through a range of formal and informal channels, which works appropriately with the small number of students. The Academy collects feedback regularly and uses it to inform future planning. Anonymous student questionnaires are completed at the end of each of its four terms. The questionnaire asks for feedback on teaching quality

and the classroom experience, as well as facilities, resources and student support. Outcomes are collated and reviewed and acted upon by the Course Committee and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Recent student feedback indicated a need for better library and computer resources. These issues have now been addressed and students are pleased with the response, although they are aware that further improvement is taking place. Students speak positively about the quality of the teaching they receive, the range and variety of teaching methods employed, the support they receive, and the accessibility of tutors.

- 2.5 The student representative system is effective, with one representative from each programme sitting on the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. Issues raised by students both to staff and representatives are effectively tackled in regular meetings. Two student officers have been elected to the recently formed Students' Union. Students also use comment boxes to make suggestions and draw attention to any concerns. The relatively small number of students has permitted an informal 'open door' approach to student support and interaction, something appreciated by the students.
- 2.6 Given the small scale of provision there is a small number of teaching and support staff. When new teaching staff are needed they are often recruited through recommendation and the professional contacts of current staff. The application process includes an interview and microteaching demonstration on which students provide comments. This is designed to ascertain the ability of staff to teach effectively and at the appropriate level.

#### How does the Academy assure itself that students are supported effectively?

- 2.7 A comprehensive system of student support is in place responding to pastoral concerns and encouraging students' academic development. The Academy has a well-established process for admissions and enrolment, and a dedicated admissions officer. There are four annual intakes of students, and all prospective students are interviewed, either by the admissions officer or programme leader. The policies and procedures that support enrolment are clear and well understood. Diagnostic testing takes place prior to or during the student's induction to flag up any weaknesses in maths or English and ensure that effective support is provided. The student induction package includes a programme of activities, including meeting staff, and an introduction to key policies, including assessment and academic conduct. They are guided through the various student and module handbooks. Students confirm this is helpful in providing a thorough introduction to the Academy and their programme of studies. An induction questionnaire is used to inform future approaches.
- 2.8 Module tutors regularly meet with students to provide formative feedback on work in progress. Students appreciate this individual support which assists them in successfully submitting their summative assignments. Teaching staff are available for individual tutorials at the end of each teaching day, and a new formalised procedure for recording tutorials has recently been introduced. Individual learning plans are developed to review and plan students' progress. Staff have developed a student tracking overview system to review students' progress individually by programme.
- 2.9 Samples of students work show a consistency in assessment and internal verification practice. Internal moderation of students' assessed work is systematic and to a detailed template. However, students receive little detailed comment, with an absence of developmental feedback on many assignments. Scripts are often not annotated with comments from assessors, instead formulaic statements are often used to state that learning outcomes have been addressed. Assessment feedback provides very little indication to students on how they can improve their performance. Internal verifiers have not drawn these deficiencies to the attention of first markers and have not made recommendations on how feedback should be improved. However, senior staff state that they are aware of the problem

and have begun to address the need for fuller developmental feedback. It is **advisable** for the Academy to ensure that internal verification of assessed work is more rigorously undertaken, and that students are provided with fuller developmental feedback.

- 2.10 The Academy has recently recruited to a new post of Head of Student Support Services to provide both academic and pastoral guidance. This is intended to deal with numerous aspects of support, such as careers guidance, work placement, disability support, complaints and personal matters. Students are either referred for support by tutors or are able to refer themselves. Students consider this to be a helpful new appointment.
- 2.11 Students confirm that they receive guidance on progression within and beyond their programme of study and some careers guidance. However, students state that there are few opportunities for educational visits, or for guest speakers, work placement or internships. These would enhance their understanding of the professional environment and would provide them with a greater understanding of the real work environment. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to further develop the opportunities for industry engagement and provide more focused careers guidance.

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

- 2.12 The Academy allocates a generous budget to enable staff to access appropriate training and development opportunities, and a wide range of external activities are undertaken. Staff are appraised annually, and individual professional development needs assessed. A comprehensive portfolio of individual development is collated annually by each member of staff. This evidences the training, seminars and conferences undertaken. Some staff undertake business consultancy which further enhances experience and current knowledge of the business environment. A number of tutors are studying for higher degrees. The Academy has engaged with its awarding organisation's staff development activities, for example, by attending sessions on assessment practice. The Academy's extensive support for a wide range of staff development is **good practice**.
- 2.13 New staff are effectively inducted through a series of meetings with current staff, and a mentoring process. Induction includes setting expectations with regard to teaching and learning, and provides information about the Academy's policies and procedures, and the awarding organisation's requirements. Staff are well qualified, and all teaching staff are educated to master's level, and most have or are studying for a teaching qualification.

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

2.14 Resource requirements are discussed and allocated by the senior management team. A variety of committees address the need to ensure that adequate resources are provided to support learning. Feedback from students informs the prioritisation of resource requirements. Students commented positively on the new premises and the highly organised way in which the recent move was conducted with no disruption to their studies. Seminar rooms are well appointed and equipped with current technology, including computers, large screen displays and projectors. There is a small library and students are encouraged to use a range of nearby public libraries, and have been actively encouraged to use the British Library. Students confirm the Academy's responsiveness to requests for additional resources. Some improvements have been made to the information technology available and to the library stock. However, the Academy acknowledges that there is still further room for improvement to ensure that learning resources enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

2.15 Students are positive about the developing use of the virtual learning environment, which provides remote access to key study and learning materials. The virtual learning environment is maintained and monitored by the Director of Studies who ensures teaching staff are uploading course materials prior to each teaching session, in line with the Teaching and Learning Strategy. Electronic slides, schemes of work and lesson plans are uploaded at regular intervals. The virtual learning environment is currently used primarily as a repository of information, but further staff development is being undertaken to develop this as an interactive teaching tool.

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

#### 3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 The Academy publishes a comprehensive range of information. The website provides a wide range of publicly accessible information. This includes a downloadable student handbook, admission requirements, application procedures, fees and general information. The online application form and informative pre-arrival information contribute effectively to the Academy's admissions process. Details of each programme and programme handbooks are available on the website. The handbooks contain the awarding organisation's programme specifications and direct links to its website, where students can access qualification specifications and further information. Induction information includes study guides, study methods, and organising and planning assignments. Schemes of work generally include a recommended reading list. Assessment instruments clearly reference learning outcomes and assessment criteria against tasks. The Academy website also contains a full list of Academy policies, including admissions, complaints, appeals and unfair practice. Students stated that they found the published information helpful and informative. Students are positive in their assessment of the information provided about the Academy, and stated that their experience matched their expectations.

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

3.2 A thorough system assures that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Processes distinguish between marketing and programme information. Programme teams check for accuracy before marketing staff finalise material for sign-off by the Principal. Academic material, such as programme handbooks, are reviewed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee before final sign off. Students are able to make suggestions for improvement through questionnaires and the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. The accuracy of information identified during the review illustrates the effectiveness with which the Academy has addressed the recommendation from the previous review to implement robustly the policy and procedures for assuring the accuracy and completeness of published 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**

The action plan was not complete at the time of publishing and will be published shortly.

#### **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: <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight">www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight</a>.

### **Glossary**

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary">www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary</a>. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook.<sup>3</sup>

**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 Ofgual to award Ofgual-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.

 $<sup>^{3}\</sup> www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAnd\underline{Guidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx}$ 

**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.

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