Essex College Ltd

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

May 2014

Key findings about Essex College Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in May 2014, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **limited 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 (ABP), ATHE Ltd and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management (OTHM).

The team also considers that there can be **limited 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 College's responsiveness to students' pastoral and academic support needs (paragraph 2.9).

Recommendations

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

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

- implement a rigorous process of systematic monitoring and review at programme and institutional level (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.3)
- implement rigorous assessment and internal verification procedures (paragraphs 1.7 and 2.7).

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

- revise the terms of reference of all committees to ensure responsibilities are clear, outcomes fully recorded, and actions consistently monitored (paragraphs 1.2 and 2.2)
- update policies and procedures to embed the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraphs 1.4 and 2.4)
- develop and implement a procedure to respond formally to external verifier and centre quality assurance reports (paragraph 1.6)
- revise teaching and learning observation procedures to reflect the specific characteristics of higher education (paragraph 2.5)
- improve written assessment feedback to students (paragraph 2.7)
- create and implement a formal staff development policy and schedule of staff development activities (paragraph 2.11)
- devise a systematic approach for understanding and responding to student resource needs (paragraph 2.13).

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

- adopt formal procedures to enable good practice in teaching and learning to be shared across and between programmes (paragraph 2.6)
- routinely include student representation in all academic committee meetings (paragraph 2.10)
- consider the use of a virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.14)
- identify and form links with relevant external organisations (paragraph 2.15)
- refine the Information Policy (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](1) at Essex College Ltd (the College), 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 (ABP), ATHE Ltd (ATHE) and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management (OTHM). The review was carried out by Professor Chris Gale, Mr Stephen Harris and Mrs Maz Stewart (reviewers) and Ms AnnMarie Colbert (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 documentation supplied by the College and its awarding organisations, the March 2013 Independent Schools Inspectorate monitoring visit report, 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 (the Quality Code)
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QCF)
- the awarding organisations' requirements.

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

The College was established in 2005 and has been based in office accommodation in Alperton, London, since 2007. The College has 21 staff. Eleven lecturers and the Quality Assurance Advisor are part-time. Full-time staff consist of the Principal, Director of Studies, Director of Marketing, Course Coordinator, four staff with administrative roles and one with a technical support role. The College's mission includes the provision of high quality teaching to enhance students' employability and assist them in realising and achieving their professional goals. At the time of the review, 375 students were enrolled across six programmes at levels 4 to 7 of the QCF. The College delivers its higher education in partnership with three 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:

ATHE Ltd
- Diploma in Strategic Management - level 7 (40)
- Diploma in Management - level 6 (216)
- Extended Diploma in Management - level 5 (38)
- Extended Diploma in Management - level 4 (10)

ABP
- Extended Diploma in Information Systems - level 7 (31)

OTHM
- Diploma in Tourism, Hospitality and Management - level 7 (40)

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2669

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College's responsibilities include student selection, admission and support; strategic development of higher education; and provision of learning and teaching, and learning resources. For ABP awards, responsibility for setting assessments rests with the College and, for ATHE Ltd and OTHM awards, responsibility resides with the awarding organisation. For each awarding organisation, responsibility for first marking rests with the College and moderation or second marking is the responsibility of the awarding organisation.

Responsibilities that the College shares with awarding organisations include: monitoring the quality of higher education teaching and learning, information in the prospectus and on the website, and the procedures for ensuring the accuracy of that information. The awarding organisations have responsibility for curriculum development, programme specifications and intended learning outcomes.

Recent developments

The College has recently expanded its facilities to include additional teaching space, a prayer room and staff room. Recent staff appointments since October 2013 include the Principal, an administrator and the Quality Assurance Advisor. The College has Pearson centre approval and is marketing level 4, 5 and 7 programmes in the current prospectus. The College is aware of the imminent cessation ABP's trading and of the arrangements for the transition of students. Responsibility for the quality assurance and award of the Extended Diploma in Information Systems will reside with the Association of Business Executives from the end of May 2014. The College have informed students accordingly.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. Following a briefing by senior staff, student representatives of five programmes initiated a process of consultation and feedback with their peers. A written submission was edited and drafted with the help of the College's Course Coordinator. Students also made a helpful contribution during the preparatory meeting and at their meeting with reviewers during the review visit.

Detailed findings about Essex College Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 For its size, the College management structure is appropriate to assure itself of academic standards and quality. The College is clear about the responsibilities delegated to it by awarding organisations. These responsibilities include monitoring student admission, retention and reviewing, and responding to annual monitoring reviews and module evaluations.

1.2 Delegation of responsibilities between the committees that contribute to the management of academic standards is unclear. The reporting structure includes the Academic, Executive and Compliance committees. There are no terms of reference for the Executive Committee, which is formed by the Principal, the Director of Studies, the Director of Marketing and the part-time Quality Assurance Advisor. Responsibilities of the Academic Committee include oversight of all academic matters, including recruitment, student progress and achievement. Membership of the Academic Committee includes the Principal, the Director of Studies and the Course Coordinator. The College states that the Course Coordinator has ad hoc responsibility for maintaining quality assurance. Minutes of meetings lack detail, actions are briefly described but timescales and implementation monitoring are sometimes unclear. The Compliance Committee deals with UK visa and immigration matters. The team saw no meeting minutes for this Committee and, according to the Quality Assurance Manual, the role of the Compliance Committee is performed by the Academic Committee. It is **advisable** for the College to revise the terms of reference of all committees to ensure responsibilities are clear, outcomes fully recorded, and actions consistently monitored.

1.3 The College has no planned cycle of programme monitoring and review by which the College may maintain a strategic oversight of its provision. The Quality Assurance Policy notes that senior staff use a range of indicators to monitor quality and assess improvement, including student feedback and lesson observation. However, there is no clear narrative describing a systematic process for creating a management overview of areas for improvement or good practice. The College reacts to reports from awarding organisations but there is no coherent system that relates the outcomes of the College's internal evaluative processes with the outcomes of external reports from awarding organisations. This inhibits the College's ability to anticipate problems which adversely affect academic standards and the student experience. Student achievement is not always explicit in the College's enrolment and completion data. Data recording student completion at level 7 were revised during the visit to accurately reflect that those completing achieved only at level 5 and that no students achieved at level 7. Minutes of committee meetings do not demonstrate effective scrutiny of retention, achievement and progression data. It is **essential** for the College to implement a rigorous process of systematic monitoring and review at programme and institutional level.

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

1.4 The College does not demonstrate an appropriate level of awareness of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), which sets out UK-wide expectations for the management of higher education. Policies are not mapped against the Quality Code nor has the College considered the Quality Code in preparation of its Quality Manual. There

is no systematic programme of review to embed relevant sections of the Quality Code into College policies and procedures. The College acknowledges the need for engagement with the Quality Code and has issued copies to staff. It takes appropriate account of other external reference points, such as those of the awarding organisations. It is **advisable** for the College to update policies and procedures to embed the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

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

1.5 External reports confirm that assessment is generally at the correct level for ATHE Ltd awards. However, it was noted that assessment and feedback to students is not always directly related to the assessment criteria and feedback to assessors tends to be generic. For the ABP Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, consecutive centre quality assurance reports note poor internal verification practice and the need for relevant and supportive feedback to students related to assessment criteria. All students on the programme failed to reach the standard and are required to resubmit their assessments or accept certification at a lower level. Action taken by the College in response to this matter includes discussion with students about certification at a lower level, discontinuation of the programme and replacement with an alternative level 7 programme of study. While the College is addressing this matter, the issue is reflective of the absence of effective quality assurance processes.

1.6 The College has no formal, written policy to support a systematic response to matters identified in external verifier or centre quality assurance reports from awarding organisations. Detailed arrangements for managing the outcomes of such reports are absent from the Quality Assurance Manual. External verifier and centre quality assurance reports are reviewed by the Course Coordinator. The College's actions are recorded in Academic Committee minutes and action plans. External reports of two awarding organisations identify areas for improvement. Formal monitoring and evaluation of the success of actions implemented from these reports is unclear in meeting minutes and action plans.
It is **advisable** for the College to develop and implement a procedure to respond formally to external verifier and centre quality assurance reports.

1.7 Internal verification is inconsistent in identifying weaknesses in assessment and in identifying remedial action for the assessor. Assessment feedback to students is limited, reducing its formative function and inhibiting the students' potential for improvement. Assessors do not always clearly relate their assessment decisions to the assessment criteria. The internal verifier tends to confirm the decision of the assessors. These weaknesses are not always identified by internal verifiers. Where internal verifiers identify action to support improvement in assessment practice, there is no evidence that the internal verifier monitors and confirms satisfactory completion of those actions. The College's internal verification policy provides extensive information about the role of the internal verifier. The role is described as including the provision of feedback to the assessor. However, the Staff Handbook provides only brief information and states that the internal verifier will second mark assessments. It is **essential** for the College to implement rigorous assessment and internal verification procedures.

1.8 In summary, the team found weaknesses in the execution of the College's procedures for the management of its responsibilities for the standards of programmes. Consequently, the College's capacity to be fully aware of problems is limited, as is the College's ability to plan and implement a timely response. The College management structure is appropriate for its size. However, delegation of responsibilities between committees is unclear and terms of reference are not available for all committees. Committee meetings are recorded, but the detail is insufficient to provide a full

understanding. The College uses some appropriate sources of information to monitor its provision. However, the College does not have a systematic approach to monitoring and review which inhibits the development of a fully informed strategic overview to support its management. The College refers to awarding organisation requirements, but does not take account of the Quality Code in developing its policies and procedures. This inhibits the contribution policies and procedures make to the College's management of academic standards. The team found insufficiently rigorous internal verification. The College responds to reports from the Independent Schools Inspectorate, centre quality assurance, and external verifiers. However, strategic and operational policies to support the College's response are absent. The College does not make full use of external reports to assure academic standards. There is no evidence that actions arising from such reports are scrutinised effectively by the College during implementation or that the College fully evaluates the success of its own actions.

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

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The College's responsibilities for managing and enhancing quality of learning opportunities are as described in paragraphs 1.1-1.3.

2.2   Delegation of responsibilities for the College's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities are not clearly and consistently described. The College states that the executive department has daily impact on student learning opportunities and that executive department expression is through the Academic Board. However, the committee reporting structure includes the Executive and Academic committees, the Academic Board is absent. Senior staff are participants in the Academic Committee, but the responsibilities of which include oversight of all academic matters including teaching and learning. Terms of reference for the Executive Committee are absent. There is no clear structure for the College to take effective oversight of learning opportunities. Minutes of meetings lack sufficient narrative to provide a clear overview of matters discussed and the associated outcomes. Timescales for the implementation and periodic monitoring of agreed actions are unclear as is evaluation of any impact of actions. Therefore, the recommendation in paragraph 1.2 also applies here.

2.3   The lack of an annual monitoring process prevents the College from taking effective oversight of the quality of student learning opportunities. For example, not correlating the content of external verifier reports with internal sources of information about assessment reduces the College's capacity to anticipate problems, or identify arising themes and their potential impact. Therefore, the recommendation in paragraph 1.3 also applies here.

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

2.4   The College has not used the Quality Code to develop the policies in its Quality Manual. Consequently, the policies are incomplete in providing an effective framework to support programme delivery. Those designed to support teaching and learning, assessment and staff development do not provide an effective framework to support the delivery of higher education programmes. For example, the Curriculum Policy has an extensive range

of generic content, but fails to embed the aspects of the expectations of relevant chapters of the Quality Code. Therefore, the recommendation in paragraph 1.4 also applies here.

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

2.5   The College's Teaching Observation Policy contains some useful generic information, but does not provide specific guidance to support higher education teaching and learning. Neither the Teaching Observation Policy, nor the teaching observation recording form enable the College to assure itself that teaching and learning reflects the characteristics of higher education as set out in relevant chapters of the Quality Code. Peer observation also takes place between College staff and with its external partners. Teaching observation records are reviewed monthly by the Academic Committee to identify areas of concern. The College does not use teaching observations as a means of identifying and disseminating good practice in teaching and learning. Although students speak highly of the teaching they receive, teaching observation is not used to its full potential. Students report the use of a range of teaching and learning strategies and confirm that their views are sought during teaching observation and during module delivery. It is **advisable** for the College to revise teaching and learning observation procedures to reflect the specific characteristics of higher education.

2.6   The team found limited evidence of any system for sharing good practice in teaching and learning. At present, the sharing of good practice is lecturer-led, and takes place informally at the end-of-term Academic Committee meeting. It would be **desirable** for the College to adopt formal procedures to enable good practice in teaching and learning to be shared across and between programmes.

2.7   Assessors are inconsistent in their provision of written developmental feedback against assessment criteria to support students to improve their work. While students receive informal oral assessment feedback, which they value, written assessment feedback is insufficient to support them to improve. It does not identify strengths, areas for improvement, or provide guidance on improving academic writing skills. It is **advisable** for the College to improve its written assessment feedback to students.

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

2.8   Pre-arrival information, the Student Admission Policy, and the College website provide appropriate information to support students during the application and admissions processes. All applications are considered by the Academic Committee. All new students participate in a College and programme induction that comprises suitable activities and information. Activities include diagnostic testing and the preparation of an individual learning plan. Students are also made aware of relevant policies, including the Student Attendance Policy and Procedure, Student Complaints Policy and Procedure and the Procedure for Academic Malpractice. Students confirm that their induction provided key information about the academic year and that their expectations have been fulfilled.

2.9   Students value the support they receive from the College and individual lecturers. The College has a formal Student Support Procedure. Staff are readily accessible to provide pastoral and academic support which students consider is timely and effective. There is a Student Welfare Officer and a qualified counsellor to support students. Academic support includes individual academic tutorials, referencing workshops and business terminology. The College also organises extra-curricular activities, including visits to places of historical interest and sports events. Students confirm that the College endeavours to make a positive response to all student requests. The College's responsiveness to students' pastoral and academic support needs is **good practice**.

2.10 Students confirm the effectiveness of communication between the student body and the College. Student representatives are either self-selecting or elected by their peers. Representatives take their role in supporting fellow students to express their views and needs seriously. Student representatives are invited to attend the Academic Committee when concerns raised by students are under review. It would be **desirable** for the College to routinely include student representation in all academic committee meetings to facilitate student contribution to quality assurance and enhancement.

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

2.11 The College has no formal staff development or continuous professional development policy. Nor is there a formal schedule of planned staff development activities. The College plans to create a staff development calendar later in the year. Teaching staff are highly qualified part-time employees who take responsibility for their own professional development. Several staff are undertaking teaching and higher degree qualifications. The College encourages staff to pursue continuous professional development and requires staff to attend workshops provided by awarding organisations. Staff development is facilitated by the College subject to resource availability. An external examiner noted that some seminars to share good practice and standardise assessment were held. While the Principal has provided a briefing about the Quality Code for staff, the College has not provided any sustained development activity to support staff in their understanding of the Quality Code. It is **advisable** for the College to create and implement a formal staff development policy and schedule of staff development activities.

2.12 Guidance for the selection and recruitment of staff is extensive. There are clearly stated guidelines for the formal induction of new staff in the Staff Appointment Policy and Procedure and the Staff Handbook. Staff confirm that the Induction Programme is helpful. Teaching observations are used to inform the College's Staff Appraisal process and set personal development targets. However, the timely review of appraisal targets is absent.

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

2.13 Students have access to adequate resources to support their learning needs but there is no systematic means of ascertaining or updating resources. The College provides a basic library, information technology suites and access to online educational resources. The acquisition of books for the library is on the basis of requests being made to the College by course teaching teams when necessary. Responses are made either on an informal basis or through the Academic Committee. Access to other library facilities is available to students at nearby public libraries, and the College provides a letter of introduction to facilitate access where necessary. It is **advisable** for the College to devise a systematic approach for understanding and responding to student resource needs.

2.14 The College is in negotiation with publishers in relation to the provision of e-library facilities. Students have access to the websites of awarding organisations. The construction of a virtual learning environment is planned. It would be **desirable** for the College to consider the use of a virtual learning environment to ensure learning resources are as accessible as possible to students.

2.15 New members of staff who have recently worked in industry provide an informal resource to students in being able to speak about current practice. Students felt this to be beneficial. However, this professional experience has limited currency once removed from the workplace. At present there is no system for inviting guest speakers to contribute to

students' understanding of the labour market and their employability. The job description of the Quality Assurance Advisor provides for 'exploring relationships with external bodies'. It would be **desirable** for the College to identify and form links with relevant external organisations.

2.16   In summary, the team identified weaknesses in the College's procedures for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities. The College's reporting structure is not clearly described and the lack of an annual monitoring process reduces the College's ability to take effective oversight of the quality of student learning opportunities. College policies are limited by lack of reference to the Quality Code. While students speak highly of the teaching at the College, teaching observation procedures do not reflect the specific characteristics of higher education and there is no formal staff development policy or schedule of staff development activities to support staff in improving their teaching and assessment practice. Students value the verbal feedback on their written work but written assessment feedback to students requires improvement. Internal verification is inconsistent and is ineffective in supporting staff to improve their practice. While responsive to students' pastoral and academic support needs, the College does not routinely include students in Academic Committee meetings. The absence of a systematic approach to ensuring learning resources are accessible and sufficient has the potential to put the quality of learning opportunities at risk.

The review team has **limited 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 College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1   The principal method of communication about learning opportunities is through the College's website. In addition, the College publishes a prospectus and a range of student and staff handbooks that include extensive information on the curriculum and assessments together with College policies and procedures. The staff handbook includes relevant details of policies and procedures while the student handbook gives appropriate information to students. The College has a presence on a social media site.

3.2   The College effectively communicates information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders. Under its agreements with awarding organisations, it receives information about programmes and modules which it is required to publish without alteration. The remainder of information published is generated by the College and subject to an effective system of content and version control. Changes are initiated through completion of a form setting out the required stages of approval before publication. The College plans to build and make use of a virtual learning environment to publish programme materials and make provision for an e-library.

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

3.3   The College's extensive Information Policy is generic in nature and does not formally identify who is responsible for monitoring each aspect of public information. Timescales for review of specific items of information are not provided but the date of the next overall review is December 2014. The Policy makes no reference to the social media platform. Although roles and responsibilities are not allocated in the Policy, in practice College managers understand their part in assuring information. The Principal, the Director of Studies, the Director of Marketing and the Course Coordinator each contribute to assuring information using an approval form to record approval. The Academic Administrator monitors the social media platform to ensure the content is appropriate. Formalising the arrangements for assuring information with clear description of specific roles, responsibilities, timescales and appropriate committee reports for all types of public information will enhance clarity about arrangements. It would be **desirable** for the College to refine the Information Policy to allocate responsibility for review of the social media platform to a specific individual and to ensure regular and ongoing review of all aspects of the policy.

3.4   In summary, the team found that the College communicates information about learning opportunities effectively. Arrangements for assuring information are adequate and reliance can be placed on published information. However, the Information Policy does not make reference to responsibilities for the social media platform.

> 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]

Essex College Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of May 2013						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• The College's responsiveness to students' pastoral and academic support needs (paragraph 2.9).	Continue to have a satisfied student community	Revise terms of reference of the Programme Committee to incorporate this as one of its core responsibilities	15 Aug 2014	Director of Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	Revised terms of reference of the Programme Committee
		Designing a feedback form so that students can rate the satisfaction on a scale of 1-5:1 being dissatisfied and 5 being satisfied	31 Oct 2014	Director of Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	Obtain feedback from students and summarise in a report format to measure student satisfaction
		Review and improve existing student voice channels to further improve the College's	1 Sep 2014	Director of Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	Student voice flow chart

Obtain regular |

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[3] The College 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 College's awarding organisations.

			Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	feedback from students and by speaking to student representatives
		responsiveness to student needs				
		Introduce drop-in hours with academic and non-academic members of staff	25 Aug 2014	Director of Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	Timetable Obtain feedback from students to check if the drop-in hours is successful
Essential	**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 **essential** for the College to:						
• implement a rigorous process of systematic monitoring and review at programme and institutional level (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.3)	Planned periodic monitoring of all academic programmes	Develop schedule of termly reviews of all academic programmes at programme committee level	31 October 2014	Programme Committee	Academic Committee	Programme Evaluation report
		Annual review of all academic programmes at academic committee level	31 October 2014	Academic Committee	Executive Committee	Annual Monitoring and Review report
		Scheduled review of status and the College's relationship with awarding bodies on the basis of	31 October 2014	Director of Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	Minutes of Academic Committee and Programme

		Programme Evaluation report and Annual Monitoring and Review report				Committee meetings
	Effective management reports enabling timely and accurate decisions	Update student academic record and progression data on regular basis	28 November 2014	Course Coordinator	Programme Committee/ Academic Committee	Student progress reports/student academic and personal records

The College will ensure that the management reports will be discussed at least twice a semester, once in the middle and once towards the end of the semester in the Academic Committee meetings |
| • implement rigorous assessment and internal verification procedures (paragraphs 1.7 and 2.7). | College has a rigorous formative and summative assessment strategy | Revise and improve existing Curriculum and, Quality Assurance policies, scheme of work, assessments and feedback cover sheets to ensure adherence to awarding body | 31 October 2014 | Principal and Director of Studies | Academic Committee/ Quality Assurance Advisor | Improved policies and procedures

These policies and procedures will be cross-checked with |

		requirements and UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)				the relevant bodies to ensure adherence and further development if required every semester
						The Academic Committee will monitor and ensure policies and procedures are implemented
		Schedule lecturer training on assessment practices in every academic term	30 Sep 2014	Director of Studies	Principal	Schedule of Training and Attendance
						At the end of the training, lecturers will be asked to complete a sample assessment
						A mock assessment will also be given in the middle of the term to ensure they adhere to

	College has an effective internal verification procedure linked with its assessment strategy	Develop a written policy on the College's response to the external verifier's report	30 Sep 2014	Direct or Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	assessment practices
						College response to external verification policy/ document titled 'College response to external verifier/ awarding body' will be discussed by the Academic Committee
		Coordinate with awarding bodies to meet their assessment requirements	30 Sep 2014 and then at the start of every academic term	Course Coordinator	Programme Committee/ Academic Committee	Minutes of Programme Committee meetings/ awarding bodies' correspond-dence and reports
		Sharing good practices in assessment and feedback during lecturer training and assessment and sharing good practice e-flyer	30 Sep 2014	Course Coordinator	Director of Studies	Academic Committee to monitor if good practices shared are being implemented by lecturers by way

						of lecturer feedback and lecture observations
		Revise and improve the Internal Verification Policy	31 Oct 2014	Director of Studies	Principal/ Quality Assurance Advisor	Academic Committee to check at the end of the semester if the internal verifier adheres to the new Internal Verification Policy
		Appoint qualified internal verifiers	15 Oct 2014	Principal	Academic Committee	Appointments of internal verifiers
		Develop and implement a formal 'Response to internal verifiers report' document	31 Oct 2014	Director of Studies	Principal	'Response to internal verifiers report' document
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 College to:						
• revise the terms of reference of all committees	Have revised set of terms of references for all committees	Revise and improve terms of references for the Programme, Academic,	31 October 2014	Principal/ Quality Assurance	Academic Committee	Actions to be given target dates and a

to ensure responsibilities are clear, outcomes fully recorded, and actions consistently monitored (paragraphs 1.2 and 2.2)		Compliance and Executive committees		Advisor		relevant staff will be held responsible to complete the actions who will have to then report to senior staff The actions will also be discussed in the subsequent Academic Committee meetings to ensure have been addressed and further discuss if it requires more attention
	Effective follow up of minutes and actions of committee meetings	Revise the procedure/document to record minutes of meetings	30 Sept 2014	Principal/ Quality Assurance Advisor	Academic Committee	Minutes of meetings
• update policies and procedures to embed the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraphs	Revised policies and procedures adhering to the Quality Code	Revise all relevant policies to ensure this	31 Oct 2014	Director of Studies/ Quality Assurance Advisor	Academic Committee/ Executive Committee	Revised policies and procedures to ensure that the Quality Code is embedded

1.4 and 2.4)						Also periodic monitoring to ensure that regular updates are incorporated A checklist will be maintained to ensure that the Quality Code is monitored at least once every two semesters
• develop and implement a procedure to respond formally to external verifier and centre quality assurance reports (paragraph 1.6)	Policy to respond to external verifier's reports	Develop a written policy on 'College response to external verifier's report'	15 January 2015	Direct or Studies/ Course Coordinator	Academic Committee	College response to External Verification Policy/ document titled 'College response to external verifier/ awarding body' will be discussed by the Academic Committee to ensure concerns in the external verifier's report is addressed to ensure fewer recommenda- tions in external verifier's reports

	Policy to respond to centre quality assurance reports	Develop a policy to respond to centre quality assurance reports from awarding bodies	30 September 2014	Principal/ Director of Studies	Academic Committee/ Quality Assurance Advisor	Monitoring and addressing quality assurance concerns by Quality Assurance Advisor based on relevant bodies reports and fulfil adherence
• revise teaching and learning observation procedures to reflect the specific characteristics of higher education (paragraph 2.5)	Observation reflects characteristics of higher education as reflected in the Quality Code	Revise teaching observation form	30 September 2014	Director of Studies	Principal	Revised teaching observation form to be evaluated once every second semester to reflect characteristics of higher education as in the Quality Code
		Disseminate good practice among colleagues during lecturer training and assessment	31 Oct 2014	Course Coordinator	Director of Studies	Sharing good practice e-flyer Academic Commitee to monitor if good practices shared

						are being implemented by lecturers by way of lecturer feedback and lecture observations
• improve written assessment feedback to students (paragraph 2.7)	Have a detailed student assessment feedback	Revise and improve existing Curriculum Policy, scheme of work, assessment and feedback cover sheets to ensure adherence to awarding body requirements and the Quality Code	31 Oct 2014	Course Coordinator	Director of Studies	More detailed assessment feedback to be given to students explaining exact topic/areas that need improvement or appreciating areas that the students have shown good understanding

Lecturers will be trained to give detailed assessment feedback at the start of every term |
| • create and implement a formal staff development policy and | Have a formal staff development policy and scheduled staff development activities | Develop staff development policy | 30 Sept 2014 | Principal | Executive Committee | Staff development policy to be reviewed at the start of every |

schedule of staff development activities (paragraph 2.11)						term in Academic Committee meetings
		Design and implement a continuing professional development calendar	30 Sept 2014	Principal	Executive Committee	Continuing professional development calendar to be designed at the start of the academic year and more dates to be added during the year Continuing professional development calendar to incorporate training by awarding bodies, partner institutions and other staff training courses
• devise a systematic approach for understanding and responding to student resource needs (paragraph	Systemic approach to identifying resource needs	Have a resource audit at the end of every term to ensure adequate resources for next term	1 Dec 2014 and then at the end of every term	Programme Committee/ Academic Committee	Executive Committee	Termly resource audit report

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
2.13).						
The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to:						
• adopt formal procedures to enable good practice in teaching and learning to be shared (paragraph 2.6)	Sharing of good practice in teaching and learning	Sharing good practices in assessment and feedback during lecturer training and assessment and sharing good practice e-flyer	31 Oct 2014	Course Coordinator	Director of Studies	Academic Committee to monitor if good practices shared are being implemented by lecturers by way of lecturer feedback and lecture observations
• routinely include student representation in all academic committee meetings (paragraph 2.10)	Programme committee have permanent presence of student representatives	Terms of reference for the Programme Committee	30 Sep 2014	Principal/ Quality Assurance Advisor	Academic Committee	Revised terms of reference for Programme Committee/ minutes of meetings of the Programme Committee
	Academic Committee to include student representatives	Student representatives to be invited to relevant academic committee meetings	31 Oct 2014	Principal/ Quality Assurance Advisor	Executive Committee	Update terms of reference for Academic committee to include student

						representations (the College already has one)/minutes of meetings of the Academic Committee
• consider the use of a virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.14)	Have e-library and virtual interface between student and staff	Creation of two sections on a virtual learning environment, namely e-books and e-resources with user names and passwords for students Students will also be encouraged to use the virtual learning environment regularly to download class notes, course materials and assessments	31 October 2014	Information Technology Manager	Principal	Fully functional virtual learning environment Written feedback will be taken from students regularly and collated for further evaluation and the College will monitor the number of visits and revisits by students to the virtual learning environment The number of visits by students to the virtual learning environment can be recorded to obtain data on its effectiveness

• identify and form links with relevant external organisations (paragraph 2.15)	Develop links with external bodies and industries	Organise guest speakers from industry Sharing of professional expertise by lecturers	19 Sept 2014 and at least once every semester	Quality Assurance Advisor	Executive Committee	Records of guest speaker/ attendance
• refine the Information Policy (paragraph 3.3).	Ongoing review of all aspects of the Information Policy	Revise information policy to ensure specific responsibilities and ongoing review	30 Sep 2014	Quality Assurance Advisor	Academic Committee	Revised policy and procedure The College will implement a timetable to discuss the information policy at the end of every semester in Academic Committee meeting to oversee that the policy is adhered to Public information audit form Publication of information approval procedure form

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/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/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/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2669

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 Educational Oversight 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**.