



**QAA**

**Outcomes from institutional audit  
Programme specifications  
Second series**



**Sharing good practice**

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### Summary

Consideration of the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 indicates that, to a large extent, programme specifications have become embedded within institutional processes for the management of quality and standards. This is reflected in the small number of features of good practice identified which relate specifically and solely to the use of programme specifications.

The main ways in which institutions use programme specifications are in their processes for approval and validation of new programmes and the periodic review of existing provision. They provide a means by which academic standards can be set and monitored, and this is reinforced by asking external examiners to comment on whether student achievement meets the expectations set in the programme specification. The audit reports suggest that as well as being a reference point in its own right, the programme specification is one way in which links are made to other external reference points such as the other elements of the Academic Infrastructure and professional body accreditation criteria.

However, the audit reports indicate that for some institutions programme specifications are designed for a wider audience, in particular being a source of information for students, both current and prospective. In order to fulfil this function effectively, programme specifications need to be accurate and up to date, and a number of audit reports note the challenges institutions face in ensuring this is the case.

A range of staff development activities aimed at encouraging engagement with programme specifications is described in the audit reports. It is evident that where there is a sense of ownership of programme specifications among academic staff, they are more likely to be consistent and reliable.

For many institutions, programme specifications are part of an ongoing development process, and in some cases have acted as a catalyst for widespread change, resulting in improvements to arrangements for the management of quality.

### Preface

An objective of institutional audit is 'to contribute, in conjunction with other mechanisms, to the promotion and enhancement of high quality in teaching and learning'. To provide institutions and other stakeholders with access to timely information on the findings of its institutional audits, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) produces short working papers, describing features of good practice and summarising recommendations from the audit reports. Since 2005 these have been published under the generic title *Outcomes from institutional audit* (hereafter, *Outcomes...*). The first series of these papers drew on the findings of the audit reports published between 2003 and November 2004. This paper is based on the findings of the institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006. It includes a brief section at the end of the paper which compares its key features with those of its predecessor in the first series of *Outcomes...* papers.

A feature of good practice in institutional audit is considered to be a process, a practice, or a way of handling matters which, in the context of the particular institution, is improving, or leading to the improvement of, the management of quality and/or academic standards, and learning and teaching. *Outcomes...* papers are intended to provide readers with pointers to where features of good practice relating to particular topics can be located in the published audit reports. Each *Outcomes...* paper therefore identifies the features of good practice in individual reports associated with the particular topic and their location in the main report. In the initial listing in paragraph 7, the first reference is to the numbered or bulleted lists of features of good practice at the end of each institutional audit report, the second to the relevant paragraphs in Section 2 of the main report. Throughout the body of this paper references to features of good practice in the institutional audit reports give the institution's name and the paragraph number from Section 2 of the main report.

It should be emphasised that the features of good practice mentioned in this paper should be considered in their proper institutional context, and that each is perhaps best viewed as a stimulus to reflection and further development rather than as a model for emulation. A note on the topics identified for the first and second series of *Outcomes...* papers can be found at Appendix 3 (page 15).

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

## Introduction and general overview

1 This paper is based on a review of the outcomes of the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 (see Appendix 1, page 11). A note on the methodology used to produce this and other papers in this second *Outcomes...* series can be found at Appendix 4 (page 17).

2 The *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications* were first published by QAA in 2000. A revised edition of the *Guidelines* was published in 2006, but the first edition was the reference point used by institutions and in the institutional audit process throughout the period covered by this paper. Reference to programme specifications (or, exceptionally, 'course specifications') can be found in all 59 audit reports, which probably reflects the degree to which programme specifications had become embedded in institutional processes by this time.

3 The *Guidelines* describe a programme specification as 'a concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a higher education programme, and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated' (*Guidelines*, p 3). A programme specification is most commonly produced within the context of institutional processes of approval and validation of new programmes or the periodic review of existing provision. The programme specification may be a starting point for the process, or it may be the outcome, in the form of a definitive programme document, or it may be both. Most institutions have central expectations and guidance about the role and format of programme specifications, but individual faculties and departments may adapt this to suit their own purposes.

4 Programme specifications, as described in the *Guidelines*, are one element of a set of reference points known as the Academic Infrastructure (which also includes *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), subject benchmark statements and the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*)), which help higher education institutions to set, describe and manage the academic standards of their provision and the quality of the learning opportunities they provide for students. The elements are intended to be complementary. Programme specifications draw upon the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements and it is sometimes difficult to separate out comments in the audit reports which refer specifically to programme specifications. This paper should therefore be read in conjunction with the *Outcomes...* papers on *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and *Subject benchmark statements*.

5 The elements of the Academic Infrastructure are some of the key reference points used in the institutional audit process, to determine the effectiveness of an institution's internal quality assurance structures and mechanisms. The audit reports note the extent to which an institution has engaged with the various elements of the Academic Infrastructure, and in the 59 reports considered in this paper, almost all were considered to have responded appropriately to the use of programme specifications.

6 The institutional audit process also examines the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information that an institution publishes about the quality of its programmes and the standards of its awards. In the 2002-06 cycle of institutional

audit, this was related to the readiness of institutions to meet the requirements for publishing material on the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) website, as set out by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in *Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final report of the Task Group* (March 2002) and *Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final guidance* (October 2003). These requirements included making programme specifications publically accessible. As TQI is no longer in existence in this format, this paper does not discuss the comments made in the audit reports about programme specifications in this connection. However, the paper does consider the importance of accurate, consistent and up-to-date information in programme specifications and the challenges for the institution in achieving this.

### Features of good practice

7 Consideration of the published institutional audit reports shows the following feature of good practice relating to programme specifications:

- the institutional framework for the assurance of quality and standards which defines central control and the devolution of authority and responsibility and includes appropriate checks and balances [including the Credit, Assessment and Programme Specifications (CAPS) project to develop a credit framework for its programmes, to review its examination regulations and to implement programme specifications, which created greater clarity and consistency in the management of academic standards] [City University, paragraph 320 i; paragraphs 29 to 46].

8 The small number of features of good practice directly related to this topic probably reflects the increasing embeddedness of the elements of the Academic Infrastructure within institutional processes (similar patterns are identified in the *Outcomes...* papers on *Subject benchmark statements* and *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*). Moreover, in several audit reports, the use of programme specifications is reported in particularly positive terms but does not result in a formally identified feature of good practice. These examples are discussed further below. In addition, the use of programme specifications may be an element within a broader area of institutional activity which is identified as a feature of good practice, and these cases are discussed in full in other *Outcomes...* papers, particularly *Validation and approval of new provision, and its periodic review*.

### Themes

9 A consideration of the feature of good practice and recommendations in the institutional audit reports which relate to programme specifications suggests that the following broad themes merit further discussion:

- the purpose and utility of programme specifications
- the audience for programme specifications
- currency and consistency of programme specifications
- staff engagement with programme specifications
- programme specifications as catalysts for change.

### The purpose and utility of programme specifications

10 The institutional audit reports indicate that institutions use programme specifications to fulfil a variety of functions. All 59 audit reports considered in this paper contain discussion of the use of programme specifications in the institution's processes for either the approval of new programmes or the periodic review of existing programmes, or both. The role of programme specifications in these institutional processes is considered briefly here, but is discussed in more detail in the *Outcomes...* paper on *Validation and approval of new provision, and its periodic review*.

11 In several audit reports, the programme specification is described as the 'primary document' for the programme approval and validation process. The detail provided in a programme specification enabled an approval or validation panel to determine whether the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities described in the proposal were appropriate and that sufficient reference had been made to external reference points and specialist advice. The proportion or percentage of change made to a programme specification for existing provision could also be used to determine whether a revalidation procedure was required or a more minor (often faculty-based) reapproval process would suffice.

12 In a small number of audit reports, it was suggested that the institution made use of programme specifications in order to clarify their use of award titles. In one case, it was noted that curriculum content and learning outcomes as set out in the programme specifications were very similar, but led to differently named awards. The report recommended that the institution consider establishing criteria to differentiate between award titles. In another report, the institution was encouraged to instigate institutional oversight of programme specifications in order to ensure learning outcomes for different programmes remained distinct.

13 Another way in which programme specifications were used by institutions to monitor and maintain academic standards was through their use by external examiners. The majority of the audit reports indicate that institutions required external examiners to comment on whether students' achievements matched the expectations set out in the programme specification.

### Programme specifications and external reference points

14 The audit reports demonstrate that for many institutions, the programme specification, as well as being a reference point in its own right, also provided the means by which links to other external reference points, including the other elements of the Academic Infrastructure, were made. In some cases this was achieved by use of an institutional template for programme specifications (see also paragraph 25), which indicated where such documents should be referenced. The reference points mentioned included legislation such as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) or for postgraduate programmes, research council requirements. For programmes accredited by a professional body, the programme specification could refer to the accreditation criteria, or in some cases, national occupational standards. The audit reports indicate that programme specifications could also be used to show how a programme linked to institutional strategies, for example on employability

skills, personal development planning or 'of linking research into teaching, providing an international context and encouraging reflective learning'.

15 Almost all the audit reports note that programme specifications made reference to the relevant subject benchmark statement(s). In most cases, the intended learning outcomes for the programme were mapped to those listed in the subject benchmark statement. Some reports recorded the benefits that institutions had found in undertaking this exercise, with one institution noting that it had 'facilitated constructive debate on the relevance of benchmark statements and external reference points'.

16 Reference to the FHEQ in programme specifications is noted in the audit reports to be less comprehensive. In a number of cases, this is explained to be because the institution had developed its own qualifications framework, consistent with the FHEQ, and referred to this instead. However, other reports make suggestions about how reference to the FHEQ in programme specifications could be increased. For example, in one case where a lack of consistency was identified in how the level of elements making up a programme was identified, the audit report recommended that a systematic approach should be adopted.

17 The evidence of the audit reports is that few programme specifications referred to the *Code of practice*. This is almost certainly because engagement with the *Code of practice* took place at an institutional level and was filtered through to programme level through an institution's own policies and procedures.

### **The use of programme specifications for joint programmes of study**

18 The *Guidelines* state that it may not be necessary for a programme specification to be produced for every joint programme as 'it may be sufficient to rely upon the programme specifications for the constituent subjects, supported by a short statement of the rationale for the combination' (*Guidelines*, p 4). However, the audit reports indicate that a number of institutions did produce programme specifications for such programmes, and some suggestions are made for further development to increase the usefulness of such documents (for further discussion see the *Outcomes...* paper on *Arrangements for joint, combined and multidisciplinary programmes*). A number of the comments relating to the use of programme specifications for joint programmes concerned a need for clarification and information on how the degree classifications for such programmes are reached, and the need for it to be clear to students the expectations of them in terms of learning outcomes and assessment.

19 In one case, the audit report noted that consistent mapping of programme and module level intended learning outcomes and assessment methods 'would help to ensure equity of the learning opportunities offered to students' on joint programmes. In another institution, the audit report commented positively on how programme specifications made clear the responsibilities of both schools involved in the joint programme.



### Collaborative provision

20 Several audit reports noted the role of programme specifications in the quality management arrangements for an institution's collaborative provision (see also the *Outcomes...* paper on *Collaborative provision in the institutional audit reports*). In a number of cases, the programme specification for programmes delivered through a collaborative partnership was required to be compatible with those operating at the home institution. The programme specification was also a key document in the validation of such provision. A number of audit reports noted that programme specifications featured in development sessions for staff at partner organisations and in one case this was considered to contribute significantly to the monitoring of this provision.

### The audience for programme specifications

21 The institutional audit reports indicate that generally the main purpose and audience for programme specifications was within institutional processes for the approval and review of programmes and the monitoring of academic standards, but nonetheless many audit reports described other uses for programme specifications which meant they were seen by a wider audience. For example, one report noted that 'it is intended that the programme specifications will be used as the basis for the production of all promotional materials', while another report described programme specifications which had 'specific sections for both students and employers, [and] are the basis for factual data for all programmes and for the contents of student handbooks and other promotional materials'.

22 However, a number of audit reports noted that institutions had found it challenging to design programme specifications which could fulfil multiple purposes. Several institutions are reported to have tackled this by developing a layered format for programme specifications which varied the level of detail of information available, either by links to other data from programme specifications held online, or by publishing information in different formats depending on the intended audience. Another institution was reported to have addressed the challenge by engaging staff and students in the design and implementation of programme specifications, resulting in 'well designed programme specifications which meet the challenges inherent in producing one document for multiple audiences'.

23 Moreover, almost all the audit reports indicate that programme specifications were intended to provide information for students. In many cases, students were reported to have found programme specifications helpful in communicating course content and expectations, for example. Some audit reports noted that where information for students was not the primary function intended for programme specifications, institutions had made revisions to make them accessible to a student readership. However, a number of reports noted that although programme specifications were available, students were either unaware of them or chose to seek information from other sources, such as programme handbooks and virtual learning environments.

24 A small number of audit reports note that programme specifications were aimed at prospective students as well as current ones. In one case, this was noted to be reflected in the written style of the programme specifications. In another institution, the programme specification set out admissions criteria for the programme.

### Currency and consistency of programme specifications

25 Whatever the audience and purpose for which programme specifications are designed, they need to be consistent, accurate and up to date in order to be effective. The institutional audit reports describe a number of ways in which this can be achieved. In the majority of the audit reports, it is noted that a standard template for programme specifications was available within the institution. This was intended to ensure that programme specifications provided consistent information and all necessary external reference points were considered. However, in a small number of cases, variability was still detected, despite the existence of a template. One institution was recommended 'to identify and draw on existing good practice within its provision' in order to standardise its approach to programme specifications. Similar suggestions to ensure good practice was shared were made in other reports where individual departments or faculties were noted to have made particularly effective use of the institutional template.

26 The audit reports also highlight the importance of the consistency of information in programme specifications when dealing with joint degrees or when institutional assessment or information regulations and requirements are interpreted differently between departments or faculties (see also paragraphs 18 and 19).

27 Several audit reports describe challenges institutions had faced in ensuring programme specifications were kept up to date. In one case it was noted that programme specifications did not reflect the revised assessment regulations and the institution was recommended to consider how it might ensure the accurate and timely updating and publication of programme specifications. At another institution, a quarter of provision in one school had been refreshed in recent years, but the audit report noted that not all the changes were reflected in the programme specifications. The report suggested that this might be related to the institutional policy of not requiring updates other than at programme approval and review events. A further level of complexity is introduced when the programme specification is the basis for other published forms of information (as discussed in paragraph 22), as these also need to be updated if the programme specification is changed.

### Staff engagement with programme specifications

28 It is evident from the institutional audit reports that programme specifications are most likely to be consistent and up to date where there is a sense of ownership of the documents among academic staff. Some audit reports indicated that there was a residual feeling among staff that programme specifications were a bureaucratic quality assurance tool with remarks about the 'burden of documentation' and 'perceived duplication'. However, in other cases, staff had been engaged in the process of developing programme specifications, and were becoming convinced of their value, for example in curriculum development.

29 A number of audit reports noted that various staff development activities had been undertaken in order to help staff understand the purpose and potential value of programme specifications and develop them in an effective manner. These included the production of guidance notes, targeted workshops and the provision of staff to act as internal consultants for the development of programme specifications for new and existing programmes. In another institution, where reservations among staff

about the pedagogical utility of programme specifications were considered to have been reflected in the content of the examples presented to the audit team, it was suggested that the matter be addressed institutionally through a development programme which explained the logic and rationale for programme specifications and sought to identify best practice.

### Programme specifications as catalysts for change

30 A number of institutional audit reports demonstrate how institutions have used programme specifications as a means of enabling development and change. In one particularly far-reaching example, programme specifications formed part of a broader project which contributed to institution-wide developments which were identified in the audit report as a feature of good practice. The Credit, Assessment and Programme Specifications (CAPS) project, through which the institution developed a credit framework for its programmes, reviewed its examination regulations and implemented programme specifications, was reported to have made 'a significant contribution to the establishment of clarity in the University's approach to the management of the standards of its awards' [City University, paragraph 38].

31 In several audit reports, programme specifications were identified as a means by which a particular problem could be addressed or a specific outcome achieved. In one case it was suggested that programme specifications could be used to help make the connection between intended learning outcomes and external reference points more transparent in the approval and review process. The audit report encouraged the institution to also use programme specifications to ensure mapping between intended learning outcomes and assessment methods. The implementation of programme specifications was reported in another audit report to have successfully addressed a similar concern.

32 For many institutions, programme specifications are part of an ongoing development process. At the time of the audit reports under consideration in this paper, some institutions were noted to still be in the process of producing a full set of specifications or ensuring their full implementation. In other cases, institutions were reported to be considering how existing documentation could be refined and improved. One institution was reported to be encouraging programme developers to produce programme specifications which were more accessible to students and employers as they produced the documents for use in programme approval and revalidation processes.

33 Another institution was reported to be undertaking a survey to identify examples of best practice in programme specifications which could be incorporated into a template that would be used to improve programme specifications across the institution. Moreover, the audit report noted that by ensuring the systematic use of programme specifications across the institution, the institution would have 'a further mechanism for assuring itself through its committees, its students and its external stakeholders of the appropriateness of the standards of its awards'.

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

34 The paper on *Programme specifications* in the first series of *Outcomes...* stated that, 'the introduction and adoption of programme specifications is developing across institutions'. The audit reports considered in this second series contain a greater volume of comment on programme specifications, reflecting the fact that many institutions had a clearer idea of their intended audience and purpose and how and why they might be used by the period 2004-06. Nevertheless, the potential for further development is also indicated, generally as a result of recognition of the role programme specifications can play in other institutional plans or processes.

35 Overall, the audit reports considered in this second series indicate generally that programme specifications have been embedded, to a greater or lesser extent, in institutional processes, and this is reflected both in the smaller number of features of good practice directly related to the topic and in the fact that there are fewer recommendations relating to engagement with programme specifications. Moreover, in several cases this has led to innovative practice or has acted as a catalyst for change.

### **Conclusions**

36 On the whole, the audit reports indicate that institutions have a clear understanding of the purposes to which programme specifications may be put and their intended audience. Institutions are no longer working through initial, developmental matters but are now grappling with ensuring that there is ownership of programme specifications among academic staff so that they fulfil their purpose and are useful to their intended audience.

37 The debates that have surrounded the programme specification since its initial development in terms of audience, purpose and format are still apparent. However, institutions are more confident in making use of programme specifications as they see fit and in some cases this has resulted in widespread improvements in quality management processes.

## Appendix 1 - The institutional audit reports

### Note

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

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

### 2004-05

City University

Cranfield University

University of Hull

University of Leicester

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

University of Nottingham

The Queen's University of Belfast

University of Surrey

University of Ulster

Goldsmiths College, University of London

Queen Mary, University of London

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

University of London

University College London

Birkbeck College, University of London

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

St George's Hospital Medical School

University of Derby

De Montfort University

University of Gloucestershire  
University of Hertfordshire  
Sheffield Hallam University  
University of Huddersfield  
Kingston University  
London Metropolitan University  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
Liverpool John Moores University  
University of Luton<sup>1</sup>  
University of Northumbria at Newcastle  
Oxford Brookes University  
University of Plymouth  
Staffordshire University  
London South Bank University  
University of Sunderland  
University of Teesside  
University of East London  
University of the West of England, Bristol  
University of Westminster  
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College<sup>2</sup>  
Canterbury Christ Church University College<sup>3</sup>  
University of Chester  
Liverpool Hope University  
University College Winchester<sup>4</sup>  
Henley Management College<sup>5</sup>

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

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Now merged with the University of Reading

Harper Adams University College  
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama  
American InterContinental University - London

**2005-06**

University of Manchester  
Courtauld Institute of Art  
Heythrop College  
University of London External System  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
The University of Bolton  
Thames Valley University  
University of Central England in Birmingham<sup>6</sup>  
University of Worcester  
Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies  
Dartington College of Arts<sup>7</sup>  
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

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<sup>6</sup> Now Birmingham City University

<sup>7</sup> Now part of the University College Falmouth

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

### **2004-05**

Birkbeck College, University of London

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

St George's Hospital Medical School

Henley Management College

Harper Adams University College

Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

American InterContinental University - London

### **2005-06**

Courtauld Institute of Art

Heythrop College

University of London External System

London School of Economics and Political Science

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Dartington College of Arts

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth



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

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

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

#### **Titles**

Institutions' frameworks for managing quality and academic standards

Progression and completion statistics

Learning support resources (including virtual learning environments)

Assessment of students

Work-based and placement learning, and employability

Programme monitoring arrangements

Arrangements for international students

Institutions' work with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies

Recruitment and admission of students

External examiners and their reports

Collaborative provision in the institutional audit reports

Institutions' arrangements to support widening participation and access to higher education

Institutions' support for e-learning

Specialist institutions

Student representation and feedback

Academic guidance, support and supervision, and personal support and guidance

Staff support and development arrangements

Subject benchmark statements

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Programme specifications

Arrangements for combined, joint and multidisciplinary honours degrees programmes

The adoption and use of learning outcomes

Validation and approval of new provision, and its periodic review

The self-evaluation document in institutional audit

The contribution of the student written submission to institutional audit

Institutions' intentions for enhancement

Series 2: concluding overview

## Appendix 4 - Methodology

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

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

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

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

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