Outcomes from institutional audit

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

Second series

Sharing good practice

Summary

Widening participation has recently been defined as 'extending and enhancing access to [higher education] experiences of people from so-called under-represented and diverse subject backgrounds, families, groups and communities and positively enabling such people to participate in and benefit from [higher education]'.

Institutions' policies and initiatives intended to widen participation and increase access to higher education are generally reported on where institutions view them as a significant part of their mission. It is noteworthy, therefore, that references to such policies and initiatives occur in 47 of the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and November 2006. The audit reports identify a substantial number of features of good practice relating to widening participation but contain comparatively few recommendations for action.

In the period covered by the audit reports, strategic commitment by institutions to improving access and widening participation took a variety of forms. Most institutions were in the process of developing and implementing existing strategies and policies for widening participation and, in some cases, incorporating them into overarching learning and teaching strategies.

The audit reports reveal the various ways in which higher education institutions were meeting the challenge of widening access. Several had established successful partnerships with schools and further education colleges in their regions. Within institutions there is evidence at both central and local levels of numerous initiatives designed to raise aspirations and attract applications from groups currently under-represented in higher education.

The diversity of student background and previous educational experience, encouraged by an active commitment to widening participation, presents a further challenge to ensure that students are retained and progress to complete their awards. There is evidence in the audit reports that institutions were developing retention strategies and policies involving the identification of students at risk by the analysis of admissions and progression data and by initiatives to support and enhance the learning experience of students recruited through widening participation.

Features of good practice identified in the audit reports range from engagement in local community activities to widen participation and involvement in partnerships to increase regional opportunities for higher education, through measures to improve student retention, to the wide range of academic and personal support provided for diverse communities of students.

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 that describe features of good practice and summarise 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.

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. Although all features of good practice are listed, in the interests of brevity not all are discussed in this paper. In the initial listing in paragraph 4, 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. So that readers can readily refer to the relevant audit report, the name of the institution used when identifying references is the name that appears on the relevant audit report on QAA's website. For those institutions where a change of name has subsequently taken place, this is noted in Appendix 1 (page 13), and is the correct name at the time of publication of this paper.

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 17).

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 of the *Outcomes…* papers. Like the first series of *Outcomes…* papers, those in the second series are perhaps best seen as 'work in progress'. Although QAA retains copyright in the contents of the *Outcomes...* papers, they can be freely downloaded from QAA's website and cited, with acknowledgement.

Introduction and general overview

1   This *Outcomes…* paper is based on the 59 institutional audits published between November 2004 and August 2006 (see Appendix 1, page 13). A note on the methodology used to produce this and other papers in this second *Outcomes…* series can be found at Appendix 4 (page 19).

2   Widening participation has been defined as 'extending and enhancing access to higher education experiences of people from so-called under-represented and diverse subject backgrounds, families, groups and communities and positively enabling such people to participate in and benefit from higher education' [How to think about widening participation in UK higher education. Discussion paper for the Higher Education Funding Council for England, David Watson, July 2006]. Widening access and improving participation in higher education continue to form a strategic aim of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), but the value of costly initiatives has been questioned in a report commissioned and published by HEFCE [Review of widening participation research: addressing the barriers to participation in higher education, July 2006].

3   It should be noted that, although there was no requirement on audit teams to report on institutional policies and initiatives intended to widen participation and increase access, 47 of the 59 audit reports make references to widening participation. These references are spread throughout the main part of the reports. Nearly half can be found in the sections on the institution and its mission, the institution's framework for managing quality and standards and the institution's intentions for the enhancement of quality and standards. There are similar numbers of references in the sections on progression and completion statistics and on academic and personal guidance and support. The reports identify a substantial number of features of good practice relating to widening participation, either directly in their Findings, or by reference to paragraphs in the Main report. Of the 47 reports which address widening participation, only three contain recommendations for action and two of these relate to the collection, analysis and use of statistical data.

Features of good practice

4   Consideration of the published institutional audit reports shows the following features of good practice relating to widening participation:

- the engagement and participation of the University, through its schools and services, in local community activities in support of its widening participation plans [City University, paragraph 320 v; paragraph 139]

- the targeted support available to particular categories of students [University of Hull, paragraph 216 v; paragraphs 108, 112, 115 and 118]

- the College's approach to outreach activity, exemplified by the INSPIRE [Innovative Scheme for Postdoctoral students in Research and Education] project and the collaboration with Thames Valley University [Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, paragraph 302 iv; paragraphs 149, 151]

- the University's regional agenda as evidenced in particular both by student recruitment and by the links with local employers, agencies and practitioners [University of Derby, paragraph 294 second bullet; paragraphs 114, 118]

- the Learning Through Work Scheme and its reflective approach to this innovative area of practice [University of Derby, paragraph 294 fifth bullet; paragraph 153]

- the retention strategy: its development, implementation and review with the full engagement of staff and students [University of Derby, paragraph 294 third bullet; paragraph 123]

- the use it makes of its ASIS [Applicant and Student Information System] at the level of the individual student and to analyse patterns and trends in progression and completion in some areas [University of Huddersfield, paragraph 317 vi; paragraphs 109 and 210]

- the steps taken by the University to support its students, including: its arrangements for their induction including the diagnostic tests and study skills support it provides for them and the work of its ASTs [academic skills tutors] [University of Huddersfield, paragraph 317 v; paragraph 146]

- the academic and pastoral support available to students at both faculty and University level [Kingston University, paragraph 237 v; paragraphs 107 and 113].

- the promising work of the CAAS [Corporate Academic Advisory Service] in terms of student support, its contribution to student retention and its development of a central system for extenuating circumstances treatment [University of Luton, paragraph 251 iv; paragraph 119]

- the introduction of STAR [Student Attainment Review] Boards as a means of supporting students at risk [University of Luton, paragraphs 251 v; paragraph 121]

- the priority given by the University to the quality of the student experience, particularly…[including] students progressing from Foundation Degrees [University of Northumbria at Newcastle, paragraph 254 v; paragraph 198]

- the strength of the Higher Education Business Partnership, its value in respect of the provision of regional opportunities for higher education, and its potential for future development [University of Teesside, paragraph 219 iv; paragraph 114]

- the range, nature and effectiveness of the University's access and widening participation activities and their clear link to its mission and strategic plan [University of Teesside, paragraphs 219 v; paragraph 114]

- the student retention project, in particular, its multifaceted action lines and use of performance indicators [Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, paragraph 238 ii; paragraphs 84, 110, 142 and 165]

- the opportunities for widening participation afforded by the delivery of the University's programmes by its own staff through the Network of Hope Colleges [Liverpool Hope University, paragraph 236 iii; paragraphs 12 and 105].

Themes

5   A consideration of the features of good practice and recommendations in the institutional audit reports which relate to widening participation suggests that the following broad themes merit further discussion:

- implementation of strategies and policies

- access and retention

- use of data

- support arrangements.

Implementation of strategies and policies

6   In the period covered by the 59 audit reports under consideration, commitment to improving access and widening participation took a variety of forms. In some institutions the aim of raising aspirations of students from lower socioeconomic groups and providing opportunities for all who could benefit from higher education was reaffirmed in corporate plans or mission statements; in others, senior members of management teams or high level committees were given the responsibility of formulating and refining widening participation strategies or implementing widening participation policies or agendas. While some institutions were found to have retained distinct widening participation strategies, others had incorporated or 'condensed' sub strategies for improving access and widening participation into overarching learning and teaching strategies. Several reports note the challenges involved in the effective implementation of widening participation policies, particularly for large and complex institutions, with a number of campuses. Small specialist institutions were found to have encountered different challenges. In one of these an active widening participation strategy had led to a more diverse student body; this had led in turn to the Students' Union taking more of an interest in academic and welfare issues and the recognition of 'a need for a shift from paternalism to partnership'.

7   Some institutions noted in their self-evaluation documents a long standing commitment to widen participation and considerable success in meeting or exceeding the funding council's benchmarks and performance indicators; several also reported taking the lead in regional initiatives, such as Aimhigher or the Higher Education Shop. Other institutions were found by audit teams to be at an earlier stage in the implementation of strategies and policies. In one institution widening participation was being implemented in a phased approach. The first phase consisted of raising its profile by the development of a widening participation action plan and encouraging teaching to student diversity; the second phase would involve the construction of a mechanism to track and monitor widening participation students; and the third phase would be the development and implementation of a strategy to encourage more mature students to return to higher education. Another institution planned a general review of its widening participation strategy following a decision to recruit greater numbers of international, part-time and Foundation Degree students. In other institutions, widening participation strategies had led to a focus on particular aspects of increasing access, such as the expansion of distributed and flexible learning or work-based learning.

8   The arrangements for developing and implementing strategies and policies for widening participation described in the audit reports varied according to the size and nature of the institution. In some institutions widening participation was included in the remit of teaching or student affairs committees, while others had established separate access and widening participation committees. 'Widening participation strategy groups' are mentioned in some reports, as are 'widening participation

officers'. In one small specialist institution a 'Centre for Creative Enterprise and Participation' provided a focus for both widening participation and knowledge transfer projects. In another, larger, institution, in which engagement with the local community in support of its widening participation plans was identified as a feature of good practice, a Centre for Careers and Skills Development was responsible for the implementation of the institution's widening participation strategy.

9   Several audit reports commented on the importance attached by institutions to partnerships with further education colleges in the successful implementation of strategies for widening participation. One institution had developed a greater focus on supporting regional and local needs by linking widening participation with regional training and collaboration with its further education partners, and several others had, in line with their widening participation strategies, focused their collaborative provision on an expansion of regional and local links and partnerships. In the case of one institution, however, it was noted that the number of local partnerships had declined as direct funding and other external changes reduced the importance of collaborative further education/higher education partnerships as a mechanism for widening participation and the institution intended to focus its further education links on just two strategic partners.

10   Two examples of partnerships with further education colleges were identified in the audit reports as features of good practice in view of their significant contribution to widening participation. In one case the institution had established a network of further education colleges in which programmes were delivered by distance learning and by university staff teaching at partner colleges. In the opinion of the audit team this initiative by the University to widen participation had succeeded in providing an experience effectively equivalent to that of students at its own campuses [Liverpool Hope University, paragraphs 12 and 105]. In the other case, a 'Higher Education Business Partnership' between a University and seven further education colleges had been formed with the purpose of broadening individual opportunities, addressing a deficit of educational opportunities, and helping embed education and training in the social and economic infrastructure of the region. From the perspective of the institution, the partnership was said to serve as 'a major vehicle for the successful delivery of part of the…widening participation and lifelong learning agenda'. It was the view of the audit team that the contribution made by the partnership to the University's own mission for widening participation, its value for the provision of regional opportunities for higher education, and its potential for future development, constituted a feature of good practice [University of Teesside, paragraphs 112 to 114].

11   Through discipline audit trails, several audit reports were able to comment on how institutional strategies for widening participation were being addressed locally by faculties, schools or departments. In response to a key feature of the institutional widening participation strategy, one department had reviewed its practices for supporting mature students and, in another institution, faculty involvement was noted in the enhancement of the first-year experience in the context of widening participation. One discipline audit trail found that the mission of the department appropriately reflected the institutional mission, with a major commitment to outreach to local schools and with particular attention being paid to accessibility and

widening participation. Another noted that the involvement of departmental staff in research on developments in the widening participation agenda was one of the activities indicating a healthy regard for the enhancement of the student learning experience. External examiners' reports reviewed in the course of a discipline audit trail were reported to confirm the view of the audit team that the departmental widening participation agenda was effectively embedded in its teaching and learning and student support activities. In another institution, a department was found to have responded carefully to the institution's strategic goal of widening participation: the programme had maintained rising levels of recruitment over the last three years, with substantial numbers of combined and single honours students entering with Access to Higher Education qualifications.

Access and retention

12   The 59 audit reports under consideration identified a range of features of good practice in relation to encouraging wider access to higher education. One institution's engagement and participation in local community activities in support of its widening participation plans included training students to act as mentors and ambassadors to work in local schools and colleges with the aim of raising 'aspirations while providing academic and personal support'; organising summer schools for pupils with little family history of higher education and master classes to provide 'a taste of the subject at university level'; and engaging in further widening participation activities through three Aimhigher partnerships [City University, paragraph 139]. Another institution, where the approach to outreach activity was identified as a feature of good practice, had developed a series of projects designed 'to encourage state school pupils to fulfil their potential' which included the distribution to schools of a computer-aided learning package in mathematics; a tutoring scheme where students help with the teaching of science in local schools; an outreach programme of summer school subject-specific courses; an e-mentoring scheme for sixth formers considering studying medicine; the employment of postdoctoral research assistants who spent part of their time in a partner school to provide teaching and assistance with the delivery of the science curriculum to pupils aged 11 to 18; and an arrangement with another institution to provide a foundation year, through completion of which students might be admitted to a medical degree [Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, paragraphs 149 and 159]. The work of another institution was also recognised as a feature of good practice in the area of widening participation in that it was leading and developing, with six other institutions, a 'Learning Through Work Scheme', an online framework for negotiating a programme which demonstrated and recognised learning achieved at work, which could contribute to a higher education qualification [University of Derby, paragraph 153].

13   Several other audit reports noted with approval initiatives to widen access to higher education. One specialist institution was reported to have in place 19 projects dealing with widening participation activity, including a Foundation to Medicine course and participation in a 'Widening Access to Health Care Education' initiative. Another institution had introduced specific initiatives to encourage progression from state schools and colleges in its region, including a programme which offered a range of awareness and aspiration-raising pre-entry activities with an alternative entry route.

The audit team learnt that the programme was greatly appreciated by those who participated in it and formed the view that it had prepared students effectively for entry into higher education. In support of its approach to widening participation, another institution was reported to have adopted a new admissions policy which marked a change in its overall approach to assessing applicants from emphasis on formal qualifications to their 'capacity to benefit' from higher education. The same institution had adopted a holistic approach to supporting widening participation and was seeking to work with schools in its region to offer encouragement to pupils who might not otherwise consider entering higher education. An example of this approach was the organisation of 'treasure hunts' in the library to help school children feel more at ease with the idea of being at a university.

14   The particular challenge presented by student retention for institutions with a strong commitment to widening participation, and the diversity of student background and previous educational experience which such a policy actively encourages, was noted in several audit reports and some features of good practice were identified. In some institutions a separate retention strategy, in addition to a widening participation strategy, was found to have been developed and, in one institution, the development, implementation and review of a retention strategy with the full engagement of staff and students was identified as a feature of good practice [University of Derby, paragraph 123]. In another institution the 'imaginative' use of data had played an important part in the initiation of a 'Student Retention Project' in which multifaceted action lines and use of performance indicators were identified as contributing to a feature of good practice. Actions to improve retention noted in the conduct of discipline audit trails included pilots of an attendance monitoring system; referral to specialist staff for assistance in academic and non-academic matters, including counselling, mathematics support and essay writing skills; the use of a first-year module as a pilot to test ways of enhancing student progression; and the conversion of first-year modules to year-long rather than semester-long formats in order to accommodate more frequent and formative forms of assessment [Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, paragraphs 84, 110, 143, and 165].

15   One institution had recently carried out a major review of induction, funded through its widening participation strategy and had also used widening participation funding to support faculties in ensuring that specific issues such as retention and the overall first-year experience were addressed. In recognition of the significance of the first-year experience for student retention, another institution had ensured that students who had entered through an Access to Higher Education programme continued to benefit from support from the student recruitment office during their first year. In the conduct of a discipline audit trail an audit team learnt from staff that enhancement in relation to widening participation and retention (particularly of combined honours students) could be attributed to the effectiveness of validation and periodic review processes. In another institution the formation of a 'Student Retention Working Group' had led to the introduction of a range of initiatives, including; a student champion scheme designed to ensure that students who required to be re-assessed during the summer were well supported a student attendance policy supported by rigorous monitoring of non-attendance; and the appointment of a case worker to identify and target support to those students most likely to withdraw.

Use of data

16   Several of the 59 audit reports under consideration drew attention to the importance of reviewing progress on, and monitoring the effectiveness of, widening participation strategies and initiatives by collecting and analysing statistical information on admissions, progression and student retention. The effective use made of an Applicant and Student Information System (ASIS) by one institution was identified as a feature of good practice. The adoption, with a view to widening participation, of an admissions criterion of 'capacity to benefit' from study could be monitored through retention statistics and, in the conduct of discipline audit trails, frequent references were made to ASIS reports and data as both enabling the identification of individual students at risk and informing curriculum changes designed to improve progression and completion rates [University of Huddersfield, paragraphs 109 and 210].

17   Other examples of the effective use of statistical information noted in the audit reports included the use of progression and retention statistics to underpin widening participation policy development and strategic planning and to monitor and review progress; the calibration of progress on the development of a widening participation strategy against both the institution's own targets and also against HEFCE performance indicators; the use of corporate data by admissions officers to report on issues such as widening participation monitoring at postcode level; the provision of data to departments to enable them to assess their progress in achieving strategic aims such as widening participation; and the use of admissions, progression and completion data to inform recruitment and student support developments. In the latter institution a strategy group, formed to improve student retention, monitored withdrawal figures on a monthly basis and took action such as providing additional support at induction to students entering through clearing. In another institution, data indicating student attrition at the point of progression from level one to level two had been linked to success in widening participation and led to the formation of a Widening Participation Working Group which encouraged and supported a variety of initiatives focusing on improving retention.

18   One of the few recommendations for action linked to widening participation in the audit reports related to the effective use of statistical information. In the conduct of discipline audit trails, the audit team learnt from staff that problems with the quality of statistical data available locally made it impossible to confirm or deny that some progression figures might be depressed by the widening participation agenda in that students were admitted with relatively low qualifications. While recognising the amount of effort and commitment the institution had given to widening participation, another report noted that there were no specific performance data monitoring progression for widening participation students.

19   One audit report noted that an institution's approach to progression and completion was a reflection of its widening participation strategy, in that the emphasis was on credit accumulation rather than completion in a predetermined period of time. While accepting the institution's distinctive approach to the presentation of data on progression and completion, the audit team encouraged it to consider the potential benefits of cohort analyses, showing cumulative progression

and patterns of progression. A similar response to its student profile and commitment to widening participation had led another institution to introduce a considerable degree of flexibility into its regulations to enable students to complete at different rates reflecting their particular circumstances. When it was found, however, that a significant proportion of students were not completing within the standard period for a programme, and that this was having a detrimental affect on completion, the regulations were reviewed and made more stringent.

Support arrangements

20   Several of the features of good practice identified in the 59 audit reports under consideration are concerned with providing support to students within the context of widening participation and diversity. One institution where support for its students was identified as a feature of good practice had noted in its self-evaluation document that, 'in the context of widening participation, students require more and different types of support than was the case with the different selection criteria used in the past' and that there was a need to be alert to the different levels of support particular students might need. Examples of such support included additional tutorial support for Higher National Diploma (HND) students when HND and degree students were taught together; formative assessment for students in their first year of studies to enable early and continuing feedback to students on their performance; and the operation of a clear attendance policy, designed to ensure that students were contacted rapidly, mostly through mobile phone text messages, if they failed to attend lectures or submit assignments. In the same institution academic skills tutors had been appointed in each school to provide support for students with generic deficits, identified on entry by means of academic skills audits [University of Huddersfield, paragraphs 144-145].

21   One audit report identified several examples of good practice in effective student support in an institution with a corporate commitment to access, widening participation and student retention. Support for students began at induction with screening to identify students with a range of language-related problems, and a Corporate Academic Advisory Service supplemented existing department level support arrangements by focusing on students at risk and offering independent, supportive and confidential advice. A recent innovation had been the introduction of Student Attainment Review Boards which met four times a year to monitor students' academic progress with a view to contacting students at risk and offering academic advice on programme-specific matters or referring them to a Learning Support Service which aimed to support students with problems with literacy, English language difficulties, or weaknesses in information technology, numeracy or study skills [University of Luton, paragraphs 7, 119, 120, 121 and 128].

22   Other features of good practice identified in the support offered to students by institutions with a commitment to widening participation included a bridging course designed to ease the path of Foundation Degree students into an honours degree programme [University of Northumbria at Newcastle, paragraph 198]; targeted support, in particular a comprehensive Mature Student Handbook, made available to mature students, in line with the implementation of a widening participation strategy [University of Hull, paragraph 113 and 118]; and the use of widening participation funding to employ full-time student support staff and to enable faculties to develop

support initiatives most appropriate to their own circumstances [Kingston University, paragraphs 108, 109, and 113].

23   Further initiatives noted in the audit reports as intended to enhance academic and personal support in the context of widening participation included:

- measures to familiarise staff with widening participation strategies
- the sharing of good practice in understanding the 'pedagogic challenge of widening participation'
- a new bursaries scheme to support widening participation
- workshops on mental health and immigration issues
- a 'Breakthrough to Learning' programme aimed at helping applicants and students to develop their understanding of academic English.

24   There were relatively few recommendations for action in the audit reports linked to student support in the context of widening participation and these were mainly directed at institutions planning to review or enhance widening participation strategies or policies. An institution which intended to review its current level and nature of academic support as part of a more general review of its widening participation strategy was encouraged to take steps to ensure the timely achievement of more coordinated provision of academic and personal support for students. In implementing the widening participation agenda as set out in its Strategic Vision, another institution was encouraged to consider a more systematic approach to diagnostic testing for numeracy and literacy skills in terms of the needs likely to be identified as a result of widening participation. It was noted in another report that the institution had recognised in its learning and teaching strategy that success in widening participation would in future necessitate a longer induction programme and the development of a support structure for non-traditional students.

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

25   The differences between the main findings of this paper and its counterpart in the first series may be explained either by differences in the size and nature of the institutions reported on, or by the fact that the main features of widening participation had become embedded within institutional strategies, policies and procedures. There are some differences in the distribution of references to widening participation within the institutional audit reports. In the second series, proportionally more references occur in the sections of the audit reports describing institutions' missions and intentions for the enhancement of quality and standards which indicates a continuing commitment in many institutions to widening participation. There are also fewer recommendations for action relating to the collection and analysis of statistical data and this may suggest that systems had become more sophisticated and were being used more effectively to monitor progress on widening participation policies and initiatives. It is also possible to detect, in the proportionally more numerous features of good practice identified in the reports, a realisation by institutions committed to widening participation of the nature and levels of support needed to improve student retention in the context of an increasingly diverse body of students.

Conclusions

26   The information in the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 confirms the conclusion reached following an examination of the 70 audit reports published by November 2004 that a substantial number of institutions were making good progress in implementing widening participation strategies and, in many cases, integrating them with other institutional strategies.

27   There is evidence in the audit reports that the importance of monitoring progress in both widening access and student retention by collecting and analysing detailed data on admissions, progression and completion had been recognised. A substantial number of features of good practice relating to the provision of support for students in the context of widening participation and improving retention are identified in the reports.

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[1]

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[2]

Canterbury Christ Church University College[3]

University of Chester

Liverpool Hope University

University College Winchester[4]

Henley Management College

Harper Adams University College

Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

American InterContinental University - London

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[1] Now the University of Bedfordshire
[2] Now Buckinghamshire New University
[3] Now Canterbury Christ Church University
[4] Now the University of Winchester

2005-06

University of Manchester

Courtauld Institute of Art

Heythrop College

University of London External System

London School of Economics and Political Science

University of Bolton

Thames Valley University

University of Central England in Birmingham[5]

University of Worcester

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Dartington College of Arts

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

[5] Now Birmingham City University

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

Title

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

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 a qualitative research software package, QSR N6®. 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® 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.