



London School of Business and Management

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

May 2012

Key findings about London School of Business and Management

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in April 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of Cardiff Metropolitan University, the University of Wales, Newport, and Edexcel.

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

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the use of the student development module, which enriches the curriculum and enhances the student learning experience (paragraph 2.9)
- the provision of opportunities for staff development, including the annual conference and staff induction (paragraph 2.12).

Recommendations

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

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

- ensure that information relating to the management of academic standards is clearly considered and progressed through the committee structure (paragraph 1.3)
- review its processes and systems for responding to external examiners' reports in order that required actions can be taken in a timely manner (paragraph 1.9).

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

- further develop and implement the proposed Teaching and Learning Strategy to ensure that students' learning opportunities are enhanced (paragraph 2.6)
- promote a shared understanding of the roles of the personal and pastoral support among staff and students to ensure the enhancement of the student learning experience (paragraph 2.8)
- develop a formalised approach to staff development policy and implementation to make the opportunities for continuing professional development clearer to staff.(paragraph 2.13).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London School of Business and Management (the provider; the School). 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 Cardiff Metropolitan University, the University of Wales, Newport, and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Peter Hymans, Rebecca Morrison and Mike Slawin (reviewers), and Maldwyn Buckland (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included external examiners' reports and annual reviews. Evidence was also gathered from meetings with staff and students and from the scrutiny of samples of student work.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- Edexcel Information Manual.

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

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

Cardiff Metropolitan University

- BSc (Hons) Business and Management Studies (18 FTEs)

University of Wales, Newport

- MBA Business Administration (36 FTEs)

Edexcel

- BTEC HND Business (49 FTEs)
- BTEC HND Information Systems (16 FTEs)
- BTEC Extended Diploma Level 7 (14 FTEs)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The provider has collaborative arrangements with the University of Wales, Newport, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Salford University and Edexcel. At present, however, the School does not offer any programmes validated by Salford University. The agreement with Cardiff Metropolitan University states that the University, through its Academic Board, has overall responsibility for the academic standards of the qualifications awarded to students. Also the University is responsible for the provision of course definitive documents and course handbooks, as is the case for the courses validated by the University of Wales, Newport.

Responsibility for the development of programme specifications and intended learning outcomes are shared with the awarding bodies, including Edexcel. The provider is responsible for developing quality systems in accordance with the awarding bodies'

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

requirements, including procedures for the maintenance and monitoring of standards. The setting and first marking of assessments are the responsibility of the provider, while the university awarding bodies take responsibility for the moderation or second marking of the assessments.

Recent developments

In November 2010, a new School Principal was appointed. A new Strategic Plan 2011-14 was drawn up through extensive college-wide consultation during December-April 2011. The Plan builds upon the achievements of the School since 2002 and the many developments that came forward through earlier strategic planning work in 2008. The Plan, together with the accompanying implementation strategy, was approved by the Academic Board and the Board of Directors in August 2011. Alongside this, the School's Statement of Values (INSPIRE) and Mission, setting out the long-term values and objectives of the School, was also approved by the Board of Directors in 2011.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The School's Student Council confirms that the student written submission was produced by students representing both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The report, produced as a result of engagement with a number of national and institutional surveys and the examination of module evaluation forms and student council minutes, was informative and accurately reflected the views of students. Students value the opportunities for course evaluation, supported by the student representative process, and confirm that their views are listened to. Additional student views were collected through focus groups. Students met reviewers during the visit and at the preparatory meeting, and discussed their submission and other matters.

Detailed findings about London School of Business and Management

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 There are clear lines of responsibility for the management of academic standards. The Principal, whose duties include academic development and review, external partnerships and quality assurance and standards, has overall management responsibility for higher education provision. The Principal reports through the Managing Director to the London School of Business and Management Board of Directors.

1.2 The School has a committee structure through which it has oversight of its higher education provision. The senior committee is the Academic Board whose membership includes the Principal, a Programmes Manager and external representatives from the awarding bodies. The team noted that the Academic Board has an extensive agenda with a system for the prioritising of items, which results in the majority of the agenda not being considered. The weekly Senior Academic Leadership Team committee also has an extensive agenda and reports to the Academic Board. In addition, the fortnightly Course Leaders' Team committee, chaired by the Principal, reports to the Senior Academic Leadership Team committee. In discussions with staff, however, there did not appear to be a clear understanding of the nature of the relationships between the committees and the flow of information and reports through the committee structure. This results in important issues not being fully addressed at senior level.

1.3 Although there are references to matters relating to the management of academic standards at various places within the committee structure, there is little evidence that these matters are given in-depth consideration. The operational nature of the Senior Academic Leadership Team committee, together with the infrequent meetings of the Academic Board with its largely external membership, does not lead to an effective balance between executive management and collegial deliberation, as stated within the self-evaluation. The team considers it advisable that the School reviews its committee structure to ensure that there is clear consideration and progression of information relating to the management of academic standards.

1.4 The School has recently completed a strategic review, which is in the process of being implemented. As part of the review, a number of major changes have been made, including the devolution of quality management functions to academic programme managers and subject group and course leaders, which had previously been overseen at institutional level. The quality function is the responsibility of the Senior Academic Leadership Team under the strategic direction of the Principal. Given the recent changes, the new systems have yet to be fully embedded and so it is not yet possible to review their effectiveness.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.5 All courses have been developed by the relevant awarding body in accordance with the provisions of the Academic Infrastructure. Senior managers demonstrated awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and have used it to develop the Taught Provision Manual, the School's key quality document. New course proposals, developed with reference to programme specifications guidelines and subject benchmark statements are aligned with

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). The use of FHEQ is effective in ensuring that the academic standards of the School's provision are set at an appropriate level. There is general awareness of the Academic Infrastructure, which is reinforced at induction day events for all academic staff at the start of each semester.

1.6 While the School has a network of industrial advisers, engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, including the Chartered Management Institute, is limited. There is, however, evidence of effective engagement by staff in the hospitality programme area, who are active in their area of expertise.

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

1.7 The School has procedures for the consideration of external moderation, verification and external examiners' reports. Course leaders receive feedback from a range of external sources, including external examiners, and ensure that relevant follow-up actions are identified and addressed. The School recognises the importance of ensuring feedback loops are closed. For example, external examiners are informed of actions taken in response to matters they have raised. Subject group or course leaders ensure that the feedback loop has been closed. This is confirmed in the Annual Monitoring Evaluation report, although the team noted that there is no specific section in the report form for actions or responses to external examiners' comments to be recorded. The awarding body for the MBA programme has also noted this and it was considered at a special meeting between the awarding body and the School.

1.8 The report from the external examiner for the BA (Hons) Business and Management top-up degree made a number of criticisms relating to over-marking and the assessment methods used. Similar comments were received from the external examiner for the MBA programme. In addition to the use of external examiners' reports for evaluation of course and module performance, faculties and departments are responsible for identifying matters which require immediate attention. In such cases, the relevant Academic Programmes Manager corresponds with the external examiner to resolve them. Module leaders are also informed if significant module-specific matters are raised. Module report forms contain a section for external examiners' comments, but the team found little evidence of structured formal responses in accordance with its own procedures and the awarding bodies' requirements.

1.9 The team concludes that the School does not, always, comply with its own or its awarding bodies procedures for formal responses to external examiners' reports. As a result, the team considers it advisable for the School to review its processes and systems for responding to external examiners' reports in order that the required actions can be taken in a timely manner.

1.10 Course leaders are responsible for completing an evaluation form for the monitoring processes carried out within the year. The form lists the various sources used in compiling the annual monitoring report and requires the course leader to evaluate the operation and effectiveness of the process. The level of evaluation, with particular focus on the use of retention and progression data contained within the completed forms is, however, variable.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The management of the quality of learning opportunities is undertaken through the framework set out in the Taught Provision Manual in accordance with the awarding bodies' regulations and the Academic Infrastructure. The Senior Academic Leadership Team has overall responsibility for the management of quality assurance. Programme managers, subject and course leaders have delegated authority for the management of quality assurance at operational level. The combination of delegated authority and central scrutiny is effective in promoting consistency of practice and facilitating greater awareness and ownership by teaching staff.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.2 As described in paragraph 1.5, the School's use of external reference points for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are effective but limited.

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

2.3 The annual monitoring process is managed and coordinated by course leaders. Module reports draw on data including student attainment, attendance and progression, student feedback and external examiners' comments. The issues raised at performance enhancement meetings also feed into the module review process. The course leader collates the module reviews and creates a course report containing an action plan. The course leader is responsible for the completion of the action plan, which is monitored and agreed by the Academic Programme Manager. Course reviews are considered by the Course Leader Team and the Senior Academic Leader Team. The inadequacy and inconsistency in responses to external examiners' reports by course leaders weakens the course review process.

2.4 The self-evaluation states that all new teaching staff are subject to peer review or are observed by their line manager each semester. The self-evaluation further states that hourly paid lecturers are encouraged to undertake peer review activities. This was confirmed during the meeting with staff, who expressed their support for the peer review process. Review feedback is fed into the appraisal system and contributes to the staff development programme. Senior staff confirmed that planning is underway to broaden the scope of peer review by training more teaching staff to undertake this function.

2.5 The student written submission confirms that the students are involved in course evaluation, through questionnaires and course leaders' tutorials. The students value these and other opportunities, including the student representative process, for receiving both formal and informal feedback and felt that they were listened to. The School is responsive to issues raised by students, evidenced by the significant progress to improvement in access to the resources and borrowing rights at Birkbeck College Library.

2.6 The Strategic Plan 2011-14 confirms that updating and implementation of the Teaching and Learning Strategy is a priority for enhancing the quality of the students' learning experience. The Teaching and Learning Strategy is due to be published in July 2012. Overall, the team found limited evidence of its development. The team considers that

it is desirable that the School further develops and implements the proposed Teaching and Learning Strategy to ensure that students' learning opportunities are enhanced.

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

2.7 The School has various mechanisms, including student representative's feedback, tutorials, module evaluations and the annual monitoring process to assure itself that students are supported effectively. Current students express their satisfaction with the standard of student services and confirm that improvements have been made, which enhance the quality of their learning experience.

2.8 The Personal Tutoring scheme, available to all students, provides an accessible and personalised service, which focuses on academic guidance, pastoral advice and advocacy. The Course Leader's Tutorial Policy 2012, however, does not sufficiently outline the pastoral responsibilities of the staff. Awareness and understanding of the key aspects of the policy among staff was inconsistent, which has led to a lack of distinction between the pastoral and academic roles of the Course Leader's tutorials. In addition, students are unclear as to the value of the Course Leader's tutorial meetings. The team recommends that it is desirable that the School should promote a shared understanding of the roles of the personal and pastoral support among staff and students to ensure the enhancement of the student learning experience.

2.9 The student development module enriches the curriculum and ensures that core academic skills are addressed in the early stages of the course. In later years, students are able to explore a range of elective topics, in agreement with staff. This effectively develops their personal and professional skills, as theory and practice are combined. Students are appreciative of the opportunities afforded to them through engagement with the student development module. The team considers the use of the student development module, which enriches the curriculum and enhances the student learning experience, to be an example of good practice.

2.10 The School has recently introduced a supportive measure, Academic Probation, for students who are deemed 'at risk' due to poor engagement and/or poor academic progress. The team acknowledges this to be an emerging strength and supports the further development of the Academic Probation policy.

2.11 There is variability and a lack of consistency in the quality of assessment feedback given to students throughout much of the provision. In reviewing student work, the team, however, noted examples of thorough and developmental feedback within some units of the BTEC Extended Diploma - Hotel and Management (level 7) programme. The team encourages the further development and implementation of processes to ensure that consistent and developmental feedback is given to all students to enable greater understanding and improve learner development.

What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.12 The School hosts a staff development session at the beginning of each semester, which is also used for the induction of new staff. The agenda for the February 2012 meeting covers a wide range of quality-related matters, including assessment design, grading and documentation and a grading workshop. In July 2011, the School hosted its first Teaching and Learning Conference, including sessions on international students and cultural adjustments in learning and teaching, and the use of academic journals to enhance the student learning experience. Two members of staff also attended the awarding body's collaborative provision event in February 2012, which addressed the use of marking criteria,

assessment setting and double marking. The team considers that the provision of opportunities, including the annual conference and staff induction, constitutes good practice.

2.13 The School publishes a brief staff development policy in the employee handbook. The team found, in discussion with staff, that neither the location nor the content of this policy was widely known or understood. At present, the School devises its staff development activities primarily in response to issues highlighted by staff. The team considers it desirable that the School develops a formalised approach to staff development policy and implementation to make the opportunities for continuing professional development clearer to staff.

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

2.14 The students welcome and value the wide variety of academic and practitioner skills and the teaching and delivery styles of the staff, confirming that these enhanced their learning experience. The students also appreciate the access to Birkbeck Library and the range of resources. The students' written submission highlights the value of lecture presentations and other resources being uploaded on the managed learning environment. The students welcome this support for their learning.

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

3 Public information

How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?

3.1 The School publishes extensive and effective information relating to courses on offer, its academic partners and awarding bodies, support, study, and student life. Accountability for the accuracy of information is the responsibility of the School. The awarding bodies confirm that they check both promotional material and course-specific information, and confirm approval of the systems in place. The School's information for students, staff and other stakeholders is compliant with collaborative arrangements.

3.2 The School's main channel for publishing information is its website. It is clear, detailed and easily navigable, and identifies its affiliations and programmes on offer. It also provides extensive information on living and studying in London, as well as testimonials from students. Prospective students can order a printed copy of the current prospectus, and receive information relating to the wider social aspects of living in London and the nature of support available to them. Students noted that the size of the School appeared larger on the website images than it was in reality. The internal Managed Learning Environment contains programme and course-specific information for students and gives staff access to key documents, including course and module handbooks, minutes of meetings, and organisational structures.

How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.3 The School recognises that, while it does not have a single overall information management strategy, the constituent elements are evident. There is clear evidence of an emerging strategy relating to information capture, management and use. The team noted the work already completed by the Academic Registrar in the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

3.4 The information for the website is provided by the various departments, while the content and style of the website is the responsibility of the IT Manager. The School undertook a usability and accessibility survey of the website in 2011. This has led to a more user-friendly website, which students now consider an accurate reflection of what to expect when studying at the College.

3.5 The School seeks feedback from students in order to help ensure accuracy and completeness of website, handbooks and course information. Feedback from students, gathered as part of the student surveys, indicates the need to improve the clarity of course specifications for students. In addition to surveys, student feedback was collected as part of the evaluation stage of the strategic review of the School's academic and business processes. Students consider that they are consulted regularly and are positive about how their views are used. The team noted that, following student feedback, the School has recognised the need to improve information on fees and references to careers opportunities on the website.

3.6 The content and accuracy of the Managed Learning Environment is the responsibility of the course leaders, overseen by the Academic Programme managers. Students confirm good access and effectiveness of the Managed Learning Environment in support of their learning. The School recognises the need to review and evaluate the style and content of the website and associated electronic information. The team confirms that clear improvements have taken place since the accessibility and usability survey.

3.7 The School states that it has established procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information, including scrutiny by the Senior Academic Leadership Team. The Senior Academic Leadership Team (SALT) takes executive responsibility for assuring accuracy and completeness of information. With specific reference to the accuracy of course information, standard templates agreed with the awarding body are used. The team was informed that generic information is produced and agreed by SALT, while course and faculty-specific information is the responsibility of the course leader. The team, however, found no evidence of discussions taking place at the SALT Committee meetings with reference to the accuracy and completeness of public information. In addition, there is no reference to the requirement to consider public information in the terms of reference for SALT.

3.8 Partners confirm compliance with collaborative arrangements, and accuracy checks are also regularly undertaken by partners with reference to both promotional material and course-specific information. The team confirms the effectiveness of the shared responsibility.

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Action plan³

London School of Business and Management action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight May 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of the student development module, which enriches the curriculum and enhances the student learning experience (paragraph 2.9) 	<p>Further develop customised modules, in consultation with course leaders for bespoke delivery, subject to a needs analysis at commencement of course</p> <p>Disseminate in London School of Business and Management 2nd Teaching and Learning Conference/prepare paper for presentation</p>	<p>Draft Schemes of Work, May 2012; consultation/approval June 2012, commencement of programmes September 2012</p> <p>July 2012</p>	<p>Student Development Course Leader, team course leaders</p> <p>Student Development Course Leader</p>	<p>Improved student attendance and engagement with content, direct relevance to courses</p> <p>Participants' feedback</p>	<p>Academic programmes managers, Principal</p> <p>Principal</p>	<p>End-of-term student feedback forms to gauge satisfaction ratings, course team leaders reports, improved quality in assessed work through progression data comparatives</p> <p>Participants' evaluation feedback</p>

³ The provider 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 provider's awarding bodies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of opportunities for staff development, including the annual conference and staff induction (paragraph 2.12). 	<p>Organise 2012 Conference; engage further with awarding partners' development opportunities, organise continuing staff induction training, guest speaker from Cardiff Metropolitan University to be invited</p>	<p>Attend partners' development workshop at University of Wales, Neport in June 2012, organise 2012 conference in June, to be held in July; plan induction training and invite guest speakers in August for September 2012</p>	<p>Academic programmes managers, team course leaders</p>	<p>Improved staff engagement and network building; improved student engagement, broadening of knowledge; sharing expertise with other professionals; positive evaluation from participants</p>	<p>Principal</p>	<p>End-of-conference feedback sheets from participants and attendees; peer observation, student survey feedback</p>
<p>Advisable</p>	<p>Action to be taken</p>	<p>Target date</p>	<p>Action by</p>	<p>Success indicators</p>	<p>Reported to</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>
<p>The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that information relating to the management of academic standards is clearly considered and progressed through the committee structure 	<p>Re-examine committee flow chart, streamline structures and frequency of meetings for Academic Board</p>	<p>August 2012, to take effect from new academic year</p>	<p>Academic programmes managers/ Principal</p>	<p>Improved transparency of information flow, less 'red tape' and improved decision-making</p>	<p>Managing Director and Board of Directors</p>	<p>External examiners' feedback at Academic Board, awarding partners' feedback through Annual Monitoring Evaluation and periodic/independent reviews</p>

(paragraph 1.3)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its processes and systems for responding to external examiners' reports in order that required actions can be taken in a timely manner (paragraph 1.9). 	<p>Establish staff development session to include areas of improvement in external examiners' reports and ensure reports tabled in appropriate committees</p> <p>Add to annual staff calendar to chart request to response times</p>	Start of academic year 2012 -13	Academic programmes managers	<p>Improvement in response to external examiners' reports and Annual Monitoring Evaluation reporting</p> <p>Improved engagement with external examiners and dissemination of good practice</p>	Principal	<p>Comments in periodic/independent reviews from awarding bodies</p> <p>Results of student surveys and Student Council feedback</p>
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> further develop and implement the proposed Teaching and Learning Strategy to ensure that students' learning opportunities 	Complete draft and obtain internal/external feedback on draft Teaching and Learning Strategy, finalise the Strategy to reflect feedback and publish to stakeholders	July/August 2012 to take effect from new academic year	Academic programmes managers/ Principal	Improvements in overall student achievement, progression and retention from September 2013 onwards	Managing Director and Board of Directors	Achievement, progression and retention data from September 2013 onwards (and previous years' comparatives), results of student surveys and Student Council feedback

are enhanced (paragraph 2.6)				Improvements in academic staff engagement and efficiency		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote a shared understanding of the roles of the personal and pastoral support among staff and students to ensure the enhancement of the student learning experience (paragraph 2.8) 	Standardise minimum requirements of a more focused Course Leader Tutorial, including one-to-one course leader/student interviews over the course of the semester	To take effect from new academic year 2012-13	Course leaders	Course Leader Tutorial attendance comparatives, staff and student feedback showing greater student engagement with course leaders' sessions	Academic programmes managers/ Principal	Course Leader Tutorial feedback sheets, including referrals' information, student surveys results and Student Council feedback, as well as Retention, Progression and Achievement data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a formalised approach to staff development policy and implementation to make the opportunities for continuing professional development clearer to staff (paragraph 2.13). 	Conduct surveys in induction week on the type of continuing professional development training that members of staff would be interested in, establish PhD programme opportunities among partner institutions for members of staff, retain formal records	First quarter academic year 2012 -13	Academic programmes managers	Level of engagement among staff for the continuing professional development opportunities developed at the School, student survey results	Principal	Student survey results and Student Council feedback, conversion of enquiries by members of staff to enrolment and participation on continuing professional development courses, Retention, Progression and Achievement data

	of staff development opportunities and take-up rate					
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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/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#)⁴

Academic Infrastructure Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

awarding body A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

awarding organisation An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

enhancement Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

framework A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

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:

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.

highly trusted sponsor An education provider 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.

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

programme (of study) An approved course of study which 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 An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, 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').

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.

quality See **academic 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 standard The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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