



# **London School of Science and Technology**

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

March 2012

## Key findings about London School of Science and Technology

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in March 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 the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality 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 this awarding organisation and body.

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 visible tracking of standards activities (paragraph 1.5)
- the extra support offered for newly appointed lecturers (paragraph 2.13).

### 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 reporting processes consistently comply with the terms of reference of committees (paragraph 1.2)
- fully implement the quality monitoring policy (paragraph 1.3)
- develop a mechanism for providing comprehensive, consistent and timely assessment information to students (paragraph 1.6)
- make clear the explicit use of external reference points to further assure academic standards (paragraph 1.8)
- identify the academic abilities of applicants prior to admission to ensure entry to the correct level of provision (paragraph 2.9)
- fully implement, audit and evaluate the revised Public Information Policy with particular reference to the registry function (paragraph 3.4)
- ensure that revised public information policy is embedded and that all staff are aware of the associated requirements (paragraph 3.5).

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

- undertake more formal recording of meetings and procedures in order to provide a clear audit trail (paragraph 1.4)
- ensure consistent use of grade descriptors to comply with the external examiner's recommendation (paragraph 1.9)
- implement its decision to formalise the standardisation of assessment decisions (paragraph 1.10)

- formally link staff appraisal to the teaching and learning and staff development policies (paragraph 2.5)
- continue to develop the teaching observation process to enable the sharing of good practice (paragraph 2.6)
- make clear its tuition fee and refund policy during pre-admission activities (paragraph 3.2)
- include arrangements for accreditation of prior learning in public information (paragraph 3.3)
- ensure that the student voice informs the content and clarity of public information (paragraph 3.6).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London School of Science and Technology (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Miss Karen Buckwell, Mr Mark Cooper and Dr Helen Thomas (reviewers), and Mrs Mandy Hobart (coordinator).

The review team conducted the initial review in March 2012 and returned to the College for a second visit in May 2012. It conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included the self-evaluation document, copies of policies and procedures, minutes of meetings and the awarding body and organisation's reports, the awarding body and organisation's agreements and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

The College was established in 2003 at Alperton House in Wembley, a multicultural part of London, which has undergone major regeneration in recent years. The College was originally set up to meet the needs of international students wishing to study undergraduate and postgraduate level programmes in computing and business. Over recent years the curriculum balance has moved towards business and hospitality programmes.

The College has recently expanded and recruitment has been directed towards students from local surrounding areas. The College currently has 827 students studying on higher education programmes offered by the national awarding body and organisation. The College mission is to be an inclusive higher education institution, meeting or exceeding the aspirations of local and international students, as well as responding to the social and economic demands of the region.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation and body, with student numbers in brackets:

### **Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality**

- Diploma in Hotel Management - level 4 (0)
- Advanced Diploma in Hotel Management - level 5 (0)

### **Edexcel**

- HNC in Business - level 4 (8)
- HND in Business - level 5 (705)
- HND in Business and Information Technology - level 5 (9)
- HNC in Computing and Systems Development - level 4 (1)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx)

- HND in Computing and Systems Development - level 5 (80)
- Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership - level 7 (19)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The management of standards and the quality of higher education is set out in the awarding body and organisation's agreements. The College is responsible for the management of standards and the monitoring of the quality of learning opportunities as specified within the agreements. The overall responsibility for the standards remains with the awarding body and organisation, and the College complies with the quality monitoring procedures.

## **Recent developments**

The recent expansion in student numbers has led the College to acquire additional rooms and to relocate all provision to the first floor of the Alperton Building in 2010. Staff numbers have also increased and a new Principal was appointed in 2010. Most provision is now accredited by Edexcel, with University of Greenwich and Ascentis programmes having been discontinued.

## **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 student submission was prepared with the support of student support staff, and one student attended a QAA briefing event. The submission drew on a meeting with students. The coordinator met students as part of the preparatory meeting, and the team met students during the review visit.

## Detailed findings about the London School of Science and Technology

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College complies with the awarding body and organisation's requirements for management of standards through defined programme management responsibilities. The main awarding partner is Edexcel with programmes offered at levels 4, 5 and 7, and the College sets and marks assessments which are externally verified. Where programmes are awarded by the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, the assessments are set, monitored and marked externally, with these programmes being phased out.

1.2 The College manages programmes to the required standards within the defined organisation structure but the monitoring process is not clearly documented. The College Board has overall governance and key responsibility for commercial interests of the College. The Executive Committee is appointed by the Board to make operational decisions. The General Management Committee (formerly the Management Committee), receives minutes from subcommittees, such as academic meetings, exam boards, admissions meetings, and reports to the Executive Committee in line with revised reporting structure introduced in January 2012. However, the minutes from previous Management Committee meetings do not demonstrate effective reporting processes, and action points from subcommittees are not recorded as being reviewed by the current General Management Committee. Therefore, consistency and transparency are not evident, and agenda items are not consistent with indicated terms of reference. It is advisable for the College to ensure that reporting processes consistently comply with the terms of reference.

1.3 The Quality Control Procedures Policy sets out the responsibilities of the programme coordinators and an overview of standards. Programme coordinators are responsible for producing reports which are forwarded to the Quality Assurance Manager. The Quality Assurance Manager reviews the reports as well as collating examinations data and summaries of student surveys, which are reported to the Executive Committee every three months. However, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate full and consistent implementation of this policy. The College system for assessment tracking shows high levels of non-submissions and non-completions, but few actions are recorded to show how this is being addressed. The team could not identify any formal internal monitoring reports completed for current Edexcel awarded programmes, and only external moderator's reports are evidenced. It is advisable that the College ensures the full implementation of the quality monitoring policy.

1.4 There is a clear established framework for quality assurance which all staff are familiar with. The College has a set of unified procedures for quality assurance set out in the Quality Assurance Handbook, led by the Quality Assurance Manager and with support of the Internal Quality Auditor. However, procedures are not fully embedded, as programme coordinators' meetings with staff are not regularly scheduled or recorded. It is desirable for the College to undertake more formal recording of meetings and procedures in order to provide a clear audit trail.

1.5 Overall responsibility for oversight of standards lies with the Quality Assurance Manager, while the Internal Quality Auditor consistently monitors curriculum activities across the programmes. Programme coordinators effectively manage the quality monitoring within individual programmes. The unit lecturers develop schemes of work and lesson plans that

are congruent with unit specifications. The assessments are designed appropriately to meet the intended learning outcomes, and there is an effective mechanism to internally standardise assessments. All assessments are reviewed by the programme coordinator and forwarded to the Quality Assurance Manager for approval. To track assessment activities, different coloured sheets are used to indicate internal verification, double marking and feedback, which ensures clarity and consistency within and across programmes. The team found that the visible tracking of standards monitoring is good practice.

1.6 Assessments submission dates are set in advance of unit delivery; however, no clear assessment schedule is provided to students at the start of each unit. Detailed information of assessment requirements are provided to students by lecturers in class, but the timing of the provision of assessment information is not consistent across units. It is advisable for the College to develop a mechanism for providing comprehensive, consistent and timely assessment information to students.

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

1.7 Edexcel has responsibilities for unit specifications which the College incorporates into handbooks linked to learning outcomes. In the case of the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality provision, all documentation is produced by the awarding organisation. The awards are identified as NQF level 4, 5 and 7, and are clearly shown in course handbooks, but not made explicit on assessment cover sheets.

1.8 The College states that the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*) has been mapped to its policies and procedures; however, there is limited evidence to indicate this has been completed to any usable level of detail. No use of subject benchmark statements was evidenced, and no applications of level statements or benchmarks were reflected in the assessment strategies. The policy on deferral of assignments is ambiguous, with little consistent understanding of extension times or the requirement to formally record the decision-making process. It is advisable for the College to make clear and explicit use of external reference points to further assure academic standards.

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

1.9 Programme reviews are conducted annually to consider assessments and students' results, and external examiners meet with senior management, academic staff and students. External examiners are appointed by Edexcel. A report is provided to the College, which is discussed at an academic management meeting where recommendations are examined and implemented as necessary. The Edexcel external examiner for business programmes suggested that all assessments should include grade descriptors. However, the team found this had not been implemented. It is desirable for the College to implement the consistent use of grade descriptors to comply with the external examiner's recommendation.

1.10 The College uses external markers to provide independent marking of assignments. Due to the rapid increase of the student population since October 2011, marking is completed by four external staff and a further four internal part-time lecturers. External markers meet with the Programme Coordinator or Unit Lecturer to familiarise themselves with the assessment requirements and the needs of student groups. The allocation of unit and lecturer pairing is based on area of subject expertise. A sample of work is also double marked, and any discrepancies are referred to the programme coordinator. While the College makes use of external markers as part of standardisation, no formalised monitoring process evaluates the effectiveness of this strategy. However, the College proposes that

monitoring will become the responsibility of the Examination Board from March 2012. It is desirable for the College to implement its plan to formalise assessment decisions to assure standardisation.

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 body and organisation.

## 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 College has a complex structure that meets the requirements of the awarding body and organisation for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities, as described in paragraph 1.2. On a day-to-day basis the Principal has oversight of the quality of provision, with responsibilities delegated by the Chief Executive Officer. The curriculum is managed by programme coordinators with support from an English language lecturer, and monitored by the Quality Assurance Manager. The Chief Executive Officer delegates responsibility for marketing, finance, human resources, library and administration to the Principal, but retains a line management function and final approval of quality mechanisms.

2.2 The College quality assurance framework addresses the needs and requirements of its awarding body and organisation. The College quality assurance cycle confirms a fluid framework which assures the management of quality assurance and enhancement. The roles of key committees are defined in respect of the quality assurance processes. These include: teaching observations, student feedback, lesson planning, internal verification, and running of external examinations as part of a framework which assures and enhances quality of learning and standards.

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

2.3 The College uses the awarding body and organisation's devised specifications as their primary external reference point. While the senior managers are familiar with external reference points, teaching staff are less clear about the applications to teaching and assessment, but comply with the awarding body and organisation's requirements. The practical application of external reference points, including the *Code of practice* and subject benchmark statements, is recognised by the College as an area for development, as outlined in paragraph 1.8.

2.4 The awarding body and organisation provide external examiners who assure the quality of programmes, including the quality of assessment feedback. The most recent external examiner's report confirms that students achieve at the appropriate level and the procedure for maintaining and auditing assessment records by the College is secure and effective.

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

2.5 The College has a clear Learning and Teaching Strategy that is linked with their learning, teaching and staff development policies. For Higher National programmes the



College follows the delivery and assessment strategies defined by the awarding body and organisation. In addition, the associated learning, teaching and staff development policies documents have a useful annex detailing the qualities and expectation of good practice for lecturers. The annex provides a code of conduct for teachers with elements also reflected in the Staff Handbook. However, neither document makes direct reference to the classroom appraisal system. It is desirable for the College to formally link staff appraisal to the teaching and learning and staff development policies to further support teaching enhancement.

2.6 The College notes that its observation process is in need of development. The classroom appraisal process and the design of the observation form are relatively basic. Observations are at present ungraded, and have initially been implemented to provide a baseline for the monitoring of teaching standards. An Assistant Quality Manager has recently been employed to further improve and formalise the process of lesson observation, and is encouraging team-teaching opportunities to promote the sharing of good practice. The College recognises the importance of formalising the sharing good practice. It is desirable for the College to continue to develop the teaching observation process to enable the sharing of good practice.

2.7 The College has clear mechanisms for collecting student feedback. Students provide feedback through end-of-semester surveys, suggestion boxes, feedback to tutors and student representative meetings. Student representatives are elected for each programme, and a student representation policy sets out clear strategies for feedback on the quality of teaching and learning. Students are advised of management responses to the points raised through email and feedback to student representatives. Student feedback indicates mixed views on the quality of teaching and learning. While a number of students identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, many also expressed their satisfaction with the level of support provided to those returning to education with few formal qualifications.

2.8 The College recognises that having a well qualified teaching team with relevant teaching qualifications is important to raising standards and maintaining quality. Staff are educated to an appropriate level and most staff also have relevant industry experience. While many staff have considerable teaching experience, few have formal teaching qualifications. The College is encouraging new and existing staff without teaching qualifications to undertake appropriate training, and the team endorses this strategy.

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

2.9 The College has a widening participation approach to admitting mature students with non-standard qualifications or entry profiles, which supports inclusive admissions practices. Clear advice and guidance is provided to potential students through open days, including essential information about the College, the courses and student finance. The student handbook sets out the induction programme and promotes understanding of course commitments. To address concerns about student academic abilities and classroom behaviour, an orientation programme has recently been introduced, including study skills, body language and conduct expectations. While admissions criteria are clearly set out in the programme requirements, the team found no evidence of testing for appropriate subject knowledge or academic skills, or provision to support entry and progression, other than through literacy and numeracy tests, and interviews. Students expressed concerns about individuals being accepted on to programmes without the relevant basic subject-related skills and knowledge to support achievement. The resulting amount of teaching time required to support these students in acquiring basic subject skills was seen by some students as holding back their progress. It is advisable for the College to identify and implement the admissions criteria for programmes to ensure the academic abilities of applicants prior to admission in order to support entry to the correct level of provision.

2.10 The Student Handbook contains helpful information to support students in their studies. Handbooks are supported by a range of other documents such as a Reviews and Appeals Policy and the Learning and Teaching Strategy. In response to student feedback about the accessibility of support services, the College recently undertook to house all support services in a one-stop-shop student support centre. Students can self-refer to this centre, or members of staff will refer students as appropriate. Students are generally pleased with the learning support provided by the College, which has improved markedly in the last academic year.

2.11 Students receive formal academic tutorials each week in allocated slots on the timetable, which meet their needs. Students value the one-to-one guidance and feedback they receive on assessments. Feedback from lecturers on the submission of work is seen as helpful in supporting students to achieve the best possible grade.

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

2.12 Staff reported satisfaction with the level of support offered by senior management, and value the range of activities that help them to effectively execute their roles. The learning, teaching and staff development policies make clear the College's commitment to developing its staff. All teaching staff have undertaken professional development activities, including more recently a staff training day with workshops on assignment setting and assessment, formative assessment methods and plagiarism. The College is committed to expanding staff development opportunities further. A strategic addendum document to the learning, teaching and staff development policies outlines further plans, including a series of planned workshops on teaching and learning in higher education.

2.13 Staff are appropriately inducted to the College and provided with a useful Staff Handbook along with an induction pack. All staff participate in formal human resources activities which provide them with a clear understanding of their contractual responsibilities. Lecturing staff receive further induction provided by a senior member of staff, normally the relevant programme coordinator, covering assessment strategies and the marking of assignments. Newly appointed lecturers are initially introduced to teaching smaller groups and are asked to shadow more experienced staff until they are ready for the challenges of the larger groups. Recently appointed staff reported that they receive a good level of support, which has helped them successfully integrate. The extra support offered for newly appointed lecturers enables successful integration as part of the team and supports the development of teaching. This is good practice.

**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 Students value the access to learning resources provided, which includes library opening hours at weekends. The College library and learning centre provides students with access to computers and the internet, and is staffed by a tutor-librarian and an assistant librarian. The library is stocked with books, online journals and learning resources. Students are also able to access the College wireless system through using their own laptops in the library and other spaces, as well as through computer laboratories. The College's Library Strategic Plan identifies the potential need to expand the library to accommodate for the growth in student numbers. As well as an increase in the physical size of the library, further investments in printed and electronic resources are planned to meet students' academic research needs. Students consider the library stock as satisfactory but would value more copies of key texts and a dedicated reference section. Lecturing staff and programme

coordinators provide the librarian with reading lists at the commencement of each semester. Following approval, books and related resources are purchased as appropriate.

2.15 Students highlighted the good quality support available to them from dedicated technicians and staff. However, students expressed concerns regarding the incompatibility of some software products in computer laboratories and other computer access areas. The College management team is aware of the compatibility problems and the College is undertaking an upgrade of software to overcome these issues. The College is developing an electronic platform to further support access to web-based resources.

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 College recognises its responsibility for information it publishes, and is currently developing additional online information in response to feedback from students and other stakeholders. The College ensures that students receive appropriate information through programme and module handbooks, including unit specifications produced by the awarding body and organisation. The student portal currently houses a common folder with teaching materials, guidance on College policies and procedures, available facilities and support including study skills. There is an embryonic staff portal which the College plans to develop further. The public information produced by the College falls into two main categories: website, local advertising to targeted groups, use of social network sites and open days for recruitment purposes; and documentation and information given to students on admission and during their studies. The website provides limited information for other stakeholder groups, although employer engagement is seen as a growth area.

3.2 The former College website included limited information to enable prospective students to make informed decisions about programmes. The College recognised this was an area for development and a new website was launched during the first review visit. The website was further updated prior to the second review visit, with information checked using procedures set out in the revised Public Information Policy and outlined in paragraph 3.4. The revised website provides adequate information on programmes, entry requirements, fees and support available. However, information on student's responsibilities to pay tuition fees, particularly the difference between the student loan payments and the set fees needs to be reinforced to prospective students. The team identified a lack of clarity about this outstanding fee element among the student body. It is desirable for the College to make clear their tuition fee and refund policy during pre-admission activities.

3.3 The website identifies the College as having a large number of mature students and offering entry criteria that recognise prior experience. However, there is little testing of skills or knowledge as outlined in paragraph 2.9. Additionally, the College provides no information about the processes for the recognition of prior learning or other non-standard entry considerations, either through the website, handbooks, the student portal or open day information. It is desirable for the College to include arrangements for accreditation of prior learning in public information for students, staff and other stakeholders.

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

3.4 The current system for the management of the accuracy and completeness of public information is well understood by the senior college personnel. The revised Public Information Policy and associated procedures are supported by the establishment of a formal registry under the management of the newly appointed Registrar. The registry acts as a central repository of all public information and houses the approval records of the decisions related to new and modified materials. The College Executive Management Committee has responsibility for the approval of public information, but in the future plans to create a Public Information Committee to review and approve information. It is advisable for the College to fully implement, audit and evaluate the revised Public Information Policy with particular reference to the registry function.

3.5 The College has a procedure for the scrutiny of public information set out in the revised policy. These new requirements address the existing inconsistencies between the scrutiny of information and the recording of outcomes to assure the accuracy or transparency of all information, as discussed in paragraph 3.4. Changes to programme information are discussed informally by programme teams. Agreed changes are sent to the Principal or other agreed manager with authority delegated by the Executive Management Committee for approval. However, at present the recording of the monitoring of the content and quality of materials is largely informal, resulting in limited evidence of consistency of applications of public information guidelines. It is advisable that the College ensure that the revised public information policy is embedded and all staff are aware of the associated requirements.

3.6 There is no clear reference to the student voice in the current production of public information or the role of student support services in supporting accessibility of information. New material developed by student support services has been reviewed by a few students and their feedback incorporated in the final version. However, this is one of the few cases where there is evidence of student feedback informing the content and clarity of new documentation. It is desirable for the College to ensure that the student voice informs the content and clarity of public information.

3.7 Following the initial review visit the team concluded that the College did not have sufficiently robust processes in place to assure the accuracy of all public information. It was evident at the second visit that good progress had been made by the College in addressing the capture, scrutiny and approval of public information. Progress has been made in the implementation of the revised policy and the review process to assure the accuracy of public information as discussed in paragraph 3.4. The team conclude that the College has sufficient processes in place to assure the accuracy of public information and are reviewing the implementation of associated policies to ensure robustness.

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 plan<sup>3</sup>

London School of Science and Technology action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight March 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the visible tracking of standards activities (paragraph 1.5)</li> </ul>	Review internal verification policies and procedures	1/9/2012	Quality Assurance Manager	Reviewed policy  New document tracking software fully implemented	Principal	Revised policies  Reports to Executive Management Committee on tracking, by the Registrar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extra support offered for newly appointed lecturers (paragraph 2.13).</li> </ul>	Develop the induction course for all teaching staff	1/9/2012	Human Resources Officer/course coordinators	Training certificates and Training Register  Student satisfaction survey	Principal	Staff appraisals and feedback forms completed by new lecturers which feed into appraisals
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the provider to:						

<sup>3</sup> 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 body and organisation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that reporting processes consistently comply with the terms of reference of committees (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Formalise references and procedures for committees</p> <p>Establishment of Registry Department and the appointment of an Academic Registrar</p>	01/08/2012	Registrar	<p>Published committee terms of reference</p> <p>Clear reporting structure for meetings and status of actions</p>	Principal	<p>Regular scheduling of meetings</p> <p>Review of meeting minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fully implement the quality monitoring policy (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	Recruit additional quality assurance support (full-time Quality Assurance Manager)	01/10/2012	Quality Assurance Manager/Vice Principal	Status reports to Executive Management Committee from Quality Assurance Manager/Vice Principal	Principal	Recorded minutes and actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a mechanism for providing comprehensive, consistent and timely assessment information to students (paragraph 1.6)</li> </ul>	<p>Recruitment of course coordinators</p> <p>Recruitment of Vice Principal</p>	<p>01/10/2012</p> <p>01/10/2012</p>	<p>Examination Officer</p> <p>Course coordinators</p> <p>Vice Principal (overall responsibility)</p>	<p>Academic and Exam Board meeting minutes</p> <p>Consistent and timely (internally verified) assessments delivered to students</p>	Principal	<p>Timely issue of assignment</p> <p>Student feedback satisfaction</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make clear the explicit use of external reference points to further assure academic standards (paragraph 1.8)</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Training</p> <p>Human Resources training support</p>	01/01/2013	Quality Assurance Manager	Use of appropriate level descriptors applied to assessments	Principal	<p>Staff awareness and relevance</p> <p>Appropriate assessment to level <i>The framework for higher education</i></p>

						<i>qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) descriptors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the academic abilities of applicants prior to admission to ensure entry to the correct level of provision (paragraph 2.9)</li> </ul>	Review Admissions Policy  Admissions Board	01/09/2012	Admissions Manager	Successful recruitment of students to target and meeting admissions criteria	Principal	Data confirming student recruitment and next recruitment intake criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fully implement, audit and evaluate the revised Public Information Policy with particular reference to the registry function (paragraph 3.4)</li> </ul>	Approve Public Information Policy by the Executive Management Committee	01/10/2012	Registrar	Reports to the Executive Management Committee on implementation of the policy	Principal	Minutes of relevant meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that revised public information policy is embedded and that all staff are aware of the associated requirements (paragraph 3.5).</li> </ul>	Staff induction, training and meetings	01/01/2013	Human Resources Officer and line managers	Reviews and sampling	Principal	Sampling reports and student satisfaction
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake more formal recording of meetings and procedures in order to provide a clear audit trail (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that a minutes reporter is available</p> <p>Establish procedures</p>	1/7/2012	Registrar	<p>Consistent meeting minutes with action points reported and consistently followed up in subsequent meetings</p>	Principal	Audited by Quality Assurance Manager to assess compliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure consistent use of grade descriptors to comply with the external examiner's recommendations (paragraph 1.9)</li> </ul>	<p>Review internal verification policies and procedures</p>	1/10/2012	Course coordinators	<p>Clarification to students of criteria for grade descriptors</p> <p>Consistent use of external examiner's recommendations</p>	Quality Assurance Manager	External examiner reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement its decision to formalise the standardisation of assessment decisions (paragraph 1.10)</li> </ul>	<p>Review internal verification policies and procedures to include marks coordination</p>	1/7/2012	Quality Assurance Manager	<p>Report from internal verifier confirming the moderation of all markers results</p>	Principal	Examination Board report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formally link staff appraisal to the teaching and learning and staff development policies (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Extend internal verification policies and procedures</p>	01/01/2013	Human Resources Officer	<p>Further development of staff development programme to meet the needs of staff, mapped to Higher Education Academy requirements</p>	Principal/Chief Executive Officer	<p>A review of staff development achievements against set objectives</p> <p>Staff training linked to appraisals</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue to develop the teaching observation process</li> </ul>	<p>Extend internal verification policies and procedures</p>	ongoing	Quality Assurance Manager	<p>A comprehensive teaching observation</p>	Principal	Evidence of dissemination of good practice



to enable the sharing of good practice (paragraph 2.6)				process with follow-up and dissemination of good practice through staff training		through staff training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make clear its tuition fee and refund policy during pre-admission activities (paragraph 3.2)</li> </ul>	Update website with information for academic year 2012-13	01/08/2012	Registrar	Published information	Chief Executive Officer	Published information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include arrangements for accreditation of prior learning in public information (paragraph 3.3)</li> </ul>	Establish internal policy and procedures	01/01/2013	Course leaders	Formal policy and procedure for accreditation of prior learning  Non-standard admissions referred to the Admissions Board	Principal	Report to Executive Management Committee  Review of actions and staff feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the student voice informs the content and clarity of public information (paragraph 3.6).</li> </ul>	Students on relevant committees	01/10/2012	Student Support Manager/Senior Academic Tutor	Minutes of relevant meetings	Principal	Actions from student suggestions

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#)<sup>4</sup>

**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 one to eight, with levels four 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:

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://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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