



# **Leicester Commercial College**

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

May 2012

## Key findings about Leicester Commercial College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in May 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 Association of Business Executives.

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.

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 high level of collective engagement in College decision-making (paragraph 1.3)
- the comprehensive use of the student voice to enhance learning opportunities (paragraph 2.6)
- the close attention given to the support of student progress, as exemplified in the intention-to-study interviews (paragraph 2.7)
- the effective focus given to staff appraisal and performance review (paragraph 2.11).

### 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:

- revise its Quality Assurance Manual to ensure that it is clear and up to date (paragraph 1.4)
- align its quality procedures with external reference points to ensure that they are informed by good practice (paragraph 1.6)
- strengthen formative written feedback to enhance student progress (paragraph 2.8)
- improve the reliability of its internet connection to enable the virtual learning environment to operate more effectively (paragraph 2.13).

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

- formalise quality assurance coordination in its management structure (paragraph 1.2)
- develop the annual review process at award level and monitor progress with accompanying action plans (paragraph 1.9)
- formalise the staff development policy to address higher education reference points (paragraph 2.11)
- review the processes for ensuring the accuracy of its published information (paragraph 3.7).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Leicester Commercial College (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 Association of Business Executives. The review was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite, Mr Bob Millington and Mr Philip Price (reviewers), and Emeritus Professor Nicholas Goddard (coordinator). Dr Penny McCracken, Assistant Director QAA, was present to observe the review.

The review team 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 a range of documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding organisation, and meetings with staff and students. A telephone conference was arranged between members of the review team and an awarding organisation's representative.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the regulations of its awarding organisation
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

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

Leicester Commercial College (the College) was established in 2002 by the current Principal who is the sole owner of the business. He is the Director and is in charge of the strategic aspects of the College operation. The College occupies premises close to the city centre, which are leased from Leicester City Council. There are currently 139 full-time international students. In addition to the Principal, and the Academic Registrar who oversees the day-to-day operation of the College, there are a full-time Systems Administrator and two College Administrators, one of whom has responsibility for student welfare, with the academic provision being delivered by 10 part-time lecturers. The College is an accredited centre for the Association of Business Executives and offers a range of courses from level 4 to 7. The College educational mission is that it 'strives to be a pace setter in the provision of professional education courses at affordable value without compromising the quality of its service and delivery'.

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

### **Association of Business Executives**

- Diploma in Business Management
- Higher Diploma in Business Management
- Graduate Diploma in Business Management
- Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management
- Diploma in Financial Management
- Higher Diploma in Financial Management
- Graduate Diploma in Financial Management

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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).

- Diploma in Management of Information Systems
- Higher Diploma in Management of Information Systems
- Graduate Diploma in Management of Information Systems
- Diploma in Human Resources Management
- Higher Diploma in Human Resources Management
- Graduate Diploma in Human Resources Management

## The provider's stated responsibilities

The College's academic provision is offered under an accreditation agreement with its single awarding organisation. The awarding organisation has the responsibility for ensuring that their processes and procedures take into account the Academic Infrastructure and *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). The College has limited responsibility for academic standards, with primary responsibility retained by its awarding organisation, which has delegated responsibility to the College for the quality of the higher education it provides.

## Recent developments

The College has recently undergone substantial restructuring of its academic provision. In the year 2010, a strategic decision was made to streamline the range of courses and to concentrate on programmes offered by the Association of Business Executives with the objective of orientating the College towards being a specialist provider of business and human resources education. The establishment of a level 7 course has been a significant recent addition to the College portfolio. There has also been more emphasis given to long-term planning and effective performance appraisal. Other developments include the introduction of a virtual learning environment, a Student Representative Council, a Board of Examiners and a Quality Assurance and Standards Committee.

## 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 students produced a submission, which the review team found to be helpful in the course of the review. The research for, and writing of, the submission was undertaken by officers of the College Student Committee and a total of 38 students were interviewed, representing approximately one quarter of the student body. A number of the College's past and present students drawn from the full range of the College courses met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the review team during the course of the visit. The review team considered the student responses to their questions useful in understanding the working of the College procedures and pastoral support structures, and found that the students were uniformly supportive of the College and its management, and appreciative of the learning opportunities provided.

## Detailed findings about Leicester Commercial College

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The awarding organisation retains most key responsibilities in respect of academic standards. The College has responsibility for meeting the required standards in the management and delivery of the programmes, and it also provides the first marking of units assessed by a research project on the postgraduate diploma. The successful inspection by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges in 2009 and annual reaccreditations by the Association of Business Executives since 2002 confirm that the College is meeting its delegated responsibilities.

1.2 Management of the provision, for which the College's Principal has overall strategic responsibility, is effective. The Academic Registrar assumes operational management at award level and reports on matters to the Principal through the Management Committee. The Registrar's oversight of standards is assured through a range of mechanisms, including the monitoring schemes of work and the scrutiny of student achievement. Day-to-day management is further supported by an Education Administrator/Student Welfare Officer, whose dual role provides a central point of contact for staff and students. It is desirable for the College to formalise quality assurance coordination in its management structures to ensure that procedures supporting academic standards and quality are aligned with changing external reference points.

1.3 The College has an effective committee structure with clearly defined terms of reference and membership. Deliberative arrangements have recently been streamlined by the setting up of separate boards of study for each level of award with clear reporting arrangements to the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee. Minutes from new committees indicate that important business relating to academic standards, such as improving submission rates of research projects, is being progressed effectively. The committee framework is designed to extend the ownership of provision management, as exemplified by the membership of the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee, which includes students, external representatives, teaching and administrative staff. The effectiveness of the committee arrangements in securing a high level of collective engagement in decision-making was confirmed by the contributions of teaching staff and student representatives at the various meetings, and this is a feature of good practice.

1.4 The College's quality assurance documentation requires further development. The Registrar's report for 2010-11 recognises the need to review and refine the College's policies and procedures, and to develop a comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual. At the time of the review, the team found that this process had not been completed and that documentation had not been updated to reflect significant recent changes, such as the establishment of boards of study. It is advisable that the College revises its Quality Assurance Manual to ensure that it is clear and up to date.

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

1.5 The College makes use of relevant external reference points in managing academic standards. It diligently meets the requirements of its awarding organisation by developing detailed schemes of work based on the approved syllabus. When curricula updating has been required, as in the recent case when the awarding organisation's awards were

modified to meet the requirements of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, the College was prompt in implementing the necessary revisions and circulating this information to students.

1.6 The College has begun to address the Academic Infrastructure; it has undertaken a useful audit of its provision and mapped the awards against the level descriptors set out in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). Meetings with staff demonstrated that the College now needs to extend this process. It is advisable that the College aligns its own quality procedures with the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*, such as *Section 6: Assessment of students*, to ensure that they are informed by good practice.

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

1.7 Academic standards are assured through the reliance placed on the awarding organisation to administer, mark and moderate students' assessment at levels 4 and 5, and their monitoring of student achievement. Teaching staff in the College make extensive reference to the national examiners' reports published by the awarding organisation. They are used with students in advising them how to prepare for examinations. The reports are also discussed in boards of study to establish the agreed assessment criteria on which the formative or summative assignments will be marked. A Board of Examiners has been established for level 7 provision; this oversees the consistency of the application of assessment criteria provided by the awarding organisation in the internal marking of assignments. It also deals with such matters as plagiarism, remarking or second marking, and student complaints or appeals against marks awarded.

1.8 The team's scrutiny of marked samples of student work confirmed the value of formative coursework to inform students of expected standards. The diligence exercised by staff to ensure that student research projects meet the challenge associated with postgraduate-level study is conspicuous both in the projects and in the discussions with the teaching team.

1.9 The College makes constructive use of the annual report prepared by the Academic Registrar to assure itself that all its obligations to stakeholders are met, a procedure which exceeds the expectations of the awarding organisation. The report is cogent and draws on extensive evidence, including student achievement and retention data, and examiners' reports to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, the report would be strengthened if it was able to draw on more detailed evidence of standards and quality at awards level. It is desirable for the College to develop the annual review process at award level and monitor progress with accompanying action plans.

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 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 is clear about the responsibilities delegated by the awarding organisation concerning the quality of learning opportunities. These include student

recruitment and induction, staff development, collecting and acting on feedback from students, and ensuring that library and learning resources are appropriate. The awarding organisation's accreditation entails an annual review of the quality of staff resources, staffing and student achievement in examinations, thereby providing confirmation to the College that it is managing its responsibilities effectively. Boards of study have recently been established to monitor, review and respond to quality issues at award level; the new structure is still in the process of being embedded. The Education Administrator monitors lesson plans to ensure that they match the curriculum.

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

2.2 Paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6 on the use of external reference points are also relevant to the consideration of the quality of learning opportunities. The awarding organisation takes account of qualification descriptors and subject benchmark statements in its course specifications, and the College's teaching is designed to meet these expectations.

2.3 Staff have been informed of the awarding organisation's requirements and the role of the Academic Infrastructure in the management of learning opportunities through staff meetings. The College engages with parts of the *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education*. However, the *Code of practice* is not fully informing College policies and procedures and providing a benchmark against which to inform self-assessment and enhancement of learning opportunities.

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

2.4 The College has appropriate procedures for the oversight of its teaching. The teaching and learning strategy provides a useful guide for staff on the methods and activities that create a stimulating learning environment, and against which their effectiveness is monitored. The strategy could be enhanced by focusing more on the priorities for the College, including students' needs for acculturation and development of academic research skills, and clearer linkage to staff review and development policies.

2.5 There are clear and effective procedures in place to maintain and enhance teaching through a three-stage teaching observation and performance appraisal process. One teaching practice observation is conducted by an external organisation. The teaching observation scheme facilitates the achievement of the teaching and learning strategy. The recently established Lecturers' Committee potentially has an important role in developing good teaching practices.

2.6 The College has effective methods to monitor student satisfaction with teaching and learning, including termly questionnaires, and through an elected Student Representative Council. The College fully responds to issues raised at the Council. Student views clearly inform the quality of teaching and the comprehensive use of the student voice to enhance learning opportunities is a feature of good practice.

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

2.7 Extensive arrangements for student support are informed by effective policy statements. The Academic Registrar takes a lead role in monitoring student support provision, and bringing any matters of concern to the attention of relevant committees. The comprehensive induction process covers both academic and non-academic areas. Students are given a student handbook and are provided with guidance on a range of

matters, including careers advice and an introduction to the College virtual learning environment. The Education Administrator provides a session on how to deal with problems, and conducts an intention-to-study interview with each student to identify support needs, including English language. Subsequently, the Education Administrator runs sessions for small groups of students. Where additional educational needs are identified, such as dyslexia, the College refers students for external support. A further intention-to-study interview is undertaken later in the academic year to review progress and identify any further needs. The close attention given to student progress and the range of pastoral support provided is a feature of good practice.

2.8 The boards of study and Board of Examiners track learner progress through discussion of student achievement in formative assessments and a review of examination results from the awarding organisation. Typically, pass rates are 60 per cent, which the College regards as satisfactory. The College has identified the problems students have in adjusting to British culture on student performance and is taking appropriate steps to mitigate this factor. Students are given both oral and written feedback on formative assessments. The College utilises a standard feedback template. However, the lecturers' comments do not make reference consistently to learning outcomes or assessment criteria, nor provide constructive advice on how students can improve their performance. It is advisable that the College takes steps to strengthen the formative written feedback that it provides to further enhance student progress.

2.9 Although all lecturers are part-time, appropriate arrangements are in place to enable students to access academic support outside classes through email and by booking tutorial appointments. The College plans to develop an interactive feature in the virtual learning environment to further support learning outside the classroom. Students indicate a high level of satisfaction with the academic and pastoral support they receive, including open access to the Principal.

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

2.10 To deliver its courses, the College employs staff who are highly qualified in their specialist area. Staff use a suitable range of teaching methods. Delivery is centred on the awarding organisation's study manuals, and class sessions include: lectures, group discussion, practice questions from previous examination papers, and supported independent study. The College's approach to staff development provides a satisfactory support for the provision, including lecturer professional development by funding staff without formal teaching qualifications to attend appropriate training courses. Staff confirmed that this activity is helpful in developing their skills.

2.11 The College identifies staff training and development needs through a rigorous process of individual appraisal and teaching observation, which incorporates a review of student feedback, and also in the boards of study. One teaching observation is conducted by a professional external organisation and followed by termly training seminars. The process of staff appraisal and performance review constitutes good practice. College staff development plans have less emphasis on subject-specific development or processes to support higher education, although individual development is noted in staff training records and all staff have recently undergone equality and diversity training. However, there is no explicit staff development policy providing a strategic focus to staff development, and it is desirable for the College to formalise a staff development policy which addresses higher education reference points.

2.12 The College is developing methods to disseminate effective practice through peer observation at board of study meetings. However, the College would benefit from more systematic procedures for the dissemination of 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?**

2.13 Generally, resources are sufficient to support the provision. The College has a basic level of physical accommodation with no library study facilities, and has concentrated on making resources available through its virtual learning environment. Basic learning resources for courses provided by the awarding organisation in the form of detailed study manuals are available to students through the virtual learning environment. Students are issued with course outlines and reading lists during induction. The College has a dedicated suite of computers, providing students with access to the internet. The effectiveness of these arrangements is overseen by the boards of study informed by termly student feedback. The student submission expressed some dissatisfaction with aspects of resources, to which the College is responding within resource constraints. However, it is advisable for the College to improve the reliability of its internet connection to enable the virtual learning environment to operate more effectively.

2.14 Major resource decisions are made by the Principal, while expenditure on book stock is delegated to academic staff. The College library only holds key textbooks and journals, and is primarily a resource for lecturers. Students are able to join local libraries and the College arranges access to a local university library. The students with whom the review team met indicated that this arrangement meets their needs for access to library 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 has an effective range of mechanisms for disseminating information about its provision to its students and other stakeholders. For example, the College produces annually a hard copy prospectus outlining its provision, the awarding organisation's arrangements and fees. This is supplemented by a printed brief Induction and Enrolment Guide to support new students to acclimatise to living and studying in the UK and to engage in College life. This guide usefully summarises a range of college-developed documents, clearly identifying services to support student success.

3.2 Printed and web-based information is designed to market the College's provision and meet its growing understanding of its public information responsibilities. It is focused on facilitating students to settle into UK life, the College and, in addition, students receive information to familiarise themselves with the academic challenges of their programme and the College's available support mechanisms. A strong feature is the comprehensive information that supports students new to the UK. It helps them to adapt effectively to living and studying at the College through the provision of information on practical everyday living matters and their likely needs.

3.3 The website is a comprehensive source of information about the College and its provision for prospective and current students and for other stakeholders. It contains information about the College facilities, such as its computing resources, programmes of study and the College's documents on its policies, quality assurance processes and student support mechanisms. The virtual learning environment provides students with information about their individual programme of studies, and hosts detailed information, lecturer notes and presentations. The College recognises the need to comply with current good practice in the design of web-based materials, such as language, layout and design principles.

3.4 Students report strong accordance between the information available to them prior to arriving at the College and their experience of living in the UK and studying at the College. The team recognises the College's effort to produce information that accurately reflects its evolving provision and supports the student experience.

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

3.5 The College generally produces accurate information, which matches its understanding of the needs of current and prospective students and which reflects the requirements of its awarding organisation. The College recognises its responsibilities for managing public information. It has recently instituted arrangements for managing the production, accuracy and completeness of information. The overall approach taken by the College is to involve a broad range of staff in the production and management of public information.

3.6 The College's management of public information is primarily under the control of its Publishing Committee with the Principal as chair and with other senior staff as members. This committee meets twice a year, normally in June and September. It works to a short Publishing Policy, but has no clear written terms of reference. Its stated role is to check all publications for accuracy and completeness.

3.7 At the most recent meeting of the Publications Committee, it was noted that not all actions to update information had been applied to the website. This was apparent in minor errors, which were detected by the team and demonstrated that the College system of checking for accuracy was open to improvement. The management of arrangements for public information needs further evaluation and development and it is desirable for the College to review its processes for ensuring the accuracy of its published information. This will enable the College to more fully convey the strengths of its provision and enhance capacity to improve its provision for current and future stakeholders.

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>

Leicester Commercial College 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 <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the high level of collective engagement in College decision-making (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	Review of collaborative decision-making protocols within each cycle of deliberative meetings to reinforce and maintain collective engagement	End of each term	Chairperson of each committee/board	Ratification of existing collaborative decision-making protocols and/or alternatives agreed	Respective committee or board	Open discussion of policies and consultation on decisions as agenda item on focus group meetings and minutes of deliberations and review of all proceedings at end-of-term staff meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive use of the student voice to enhance learning opportunities (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	Review of methods to collect student voice with particular attention to the use of information and computing technology  Increased participation	End of each term	Student Committee President	Review process recorded in Student Committee minutes	Quality Assurance and Standard Committee	Review of feedback process by Student Committee and inclusion of student representative in the Quality

<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 organisation.

	of Student Committee in capturing the student voice					Assurance and Standard Committee meetings in October 2012 and April 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the close attention given to the support of student progress, as exemplified in the intention-to-study interviews (paragraph 2.7)</li> </ul>	<p>Review of student support process as an aspect of the Performance Development Review meeting with Education Administrator</p> <p>Critical aspects to be included as action plans in the Performance Development Review process</p>	<p>Yearly Performance Development Review process</p> <p>First meeting in September 2012 and final review in May/June 2013</p>	Education Administrator	<p>Relevant action plans in Performance Development Review process followed up and any issues arising and agreed for action executed</p> <p>Student progress and acculturation issues recorded and feedback given</p>	Academic Registrar	<p>Regular meetings with Education Administrator to review action plans and to include any new arising issues</p> <p>Review of all issues at the end of each term</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective focus given to staff appraisal and performance review (paragraph 2.11).</li> </ul>	<p>Increased focus on subject-specific professional and academic development through postgraduate studies and alumni associations</p> <p>To be discussed in individual Performance Development Review meetings</p>	<p>September/October 2012</p> <p>Final review in April/May 2013</p>	Academic Registrar	<p>Attendance to in-house training and recognition of academic studies undertaken</p> <p>Review of alumni associations</p>	Management Board	<p>Review of feedback received from external training organisations and progress of postgraduate studies undertaken at final Performance Development Review in April/May 2013</p>

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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>revise its Quality Assurance Manual to ensure that it is clear and up to date (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	<p>All policies and procedures to be reviewed and updated as necessary</p> <p>Mapping of critical processes to ensure coherence and accountability</p>	March 2013	Principal	All critical processes mapped to the <i>Code of practice</i>	Quality Assurance and Standards Committee	<p>Analysis of feedback from stakeholders regarding mapped procedures and associated documentation</p> <p>Use of focused group meetings to check on coherence and clarity</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>align its quality procedures with external reference points to ensure that they are informed by good practice (paragraph 1.6)</li> </ul>	Critical process maps (as above) to include references to the <i>Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students</i> and other relevant sections	March 2013	Principal	<p>All process mapped to the <i>Code of practice</i></p> <p>Staff awareness and application of the essential sections of the <i>Code of practice</i></p>	Quality Assurance and Standards Committee	<p>Completed mapping of procedures and associated documentation reviewed by Quality Assurance and Standard Committee</p> <p>Staff members' focus group meeting minutes to assess</p>

						knowledge and use of assessment methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen formative written feedback to enhance student progress (paragraph 2.8)</li> </ul>	<p>Tutor training session on formative feedback</p> <p>Devise a standard protocol of providing feedback and feedback-on-feedback</p>	October 2012	East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (EMCETT)	<p>Agreed feedback protocol implemented</p> <p>Successful implementation review</p>	Quality Assurance and Standards Committee	<p>Provision of feedback from training session</p> <p>Discussion of feedback and identification of further training needs to be agenda item on Quality Assurance and Standard Committee and staff meetings during the semester</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve the reliability of its internet connection to enable the virtual learning environment to operate more effectively (paragraph 2.13).</li> </ul>	<p>Review of potential hardware and software upgrades and investigate a more diverse range of information and computing technology support hardware</p> <p>Phased upgrades of information and computing technology facilities</p>	<p>September 2012</p> <p>December 2012</p>	IT Administrator and Principal	<p>Upgrade plan agreed and included in budget</p> <p>First phase of upgrade completed</p>	Management Board	<p>Feedback from users regarding upgrades and effectiveness of alternative information and computing technology resources</p> <p>Included as a feedback point in students' feedback forms to</p>

<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:						be reviewed once per term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise quality assurance coordination in its management structure (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Review and, where necessary, update existing policies and procedures</p> <p>Mapping of critical processes to include quality assurance role map</p> <p>These actions will clarify related role responsibilities and monitoring of alignment with external reference points</p>	March 2013	Principal	Quality assurance role map produced and agreed, and awareness by staff of their roles in the quality assurance process	Quality Assurance and Standards Committee	<p>Analysis based on review of critical processes and awareness of role holders of their responsibilities in the maintenance of standards and quality</p> <p>Reviews carried out at the end of each term of boards of study activities and focus group meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop the annual review process at award level and monitor progress with accompanying action plans (paragraph 1.9)</li> </ul>	<p>Review and update Annual Report structure to ensure that reviews and activities captured by boards of study at award level are included</p> <p>Include action plans arising in individual</p>	Oct 2012 and May 2013	Academic Registrar and Principal	Revised Annual Report structure implemented and adopted in the new report for year ending August 2012	Management Board	<p>Internal consultation and development of action plans during staff meetings based on the report</p> <p>Review by Management</p>

	Performance Development process and relevant committees' activities					Board of feedback from stakeholders, for example boards of study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise the staff development policy to address higher education reference points (paragraph 2.11)</li> </ul>	Review and update the Staff Development Policy to include reference to: the Association of Business Executives award level requirements, personal academic development and the <i>Code of practice</i>	March 2013	Academic Registrar	Agreed and updated Staff Development Policy and inclusion of higher education reference points  Revised Staff Handbook	Management Board	<p>Evaluation of development requirements of new and existing tutors and mapping of development policy to higher education reference points</p> <p>End-of-first-term staff meeting to review adequacy of revised policy and to be confirmed in March 2013 meeting</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the processes for ensuring the accuracy of its published information (paragraph 3.7).</li> </ul>	<p>Review of published information to ensure currency of website material</p> <p>Review of Publishing Policy to ensure regular review of all published information and coordination of delegated</p>	September 2012 and April 2013	Principal (Oversight) and IT Administrator	<p>New protocol established for ensuring currency of web-based information</p> <p>Development and publication of new prospectus for 2012-13 adhering to</p>	Publications Review Committee	<p>Evaluate publication process for both paper-based and electronic information</p> <p>Further checks and corrections of these as an ongoing process</p>

	responsibilities			new protocol		Focus group meetings to review published information in November 2012 and April 2013
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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](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 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:

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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.

**RG 989 08/12**

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© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 645 3

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786