



# **St John's College Nottingham**

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

June 2012

## Key findings about St John's College Nottingham

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 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 University of Nottingham, University of Chester, University of Gloucestershire and Staffordshire University.

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

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

### Good practice

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

- the additional support for students provided by proactive library staff and access to online resources (paragraphs 2.17, 3.4).

### 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:

- clarify management responsibilities and simplify organisational structures (paragraphs 1.5 and 1.8)
- return marked work, with feedback to students, consistently within the timescale set by the awarding bodies (paragraph 1.11)
- improve the provision of information, advice and guidance at the academic induction stage (paragraphs 2.10 and 3.2)
- develop a simplified and more strategic approach to staff development (paragraph 2.15).

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

- strengthen the effectiveness of student representation on College committees (paragraph 1.6)
- involve all external markers in College assessment training and standardisation events (paragraphs 1.12 and 2.8)
- link observation of teaching and appraisal to planned staff development (paragraphs 2.6 and 2.14)
- review tutorial arrangements to provide equitable and appropriate access to academic guidance and support (paragraph 2.11)
- implement a formal policy to ensure accuracy, completeness and consistency of all public 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 St John's College Nottingham (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 University of Nottingham, University of Chester, University of Gloucestershire and Staffordshire University. The review was carried out by Dr Gillian Blunden, Mr Mike Coulson and Ms Francine Norris (reviewers), and Dr John Hurley (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> This review formed part of a linked series of review visits to six theology colleges training ordinands and laity for Anglican, Methodist, United Reformed and Baptist churches. The colleges underwent a common preparation process for the visits which were carried out by two teams. Reports are made individually on each college and reflect their diverse organisation and character.

Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, and placement providers. The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the Churches' Quality in Formation Framework.

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

St John's College Nottingham is the second oldest and largest of the 11 Church of England theological colleges. It was founded in 1863 as the London College of Divinity, but soon relocated to Highbury where it remained for around 80 years. The College moved to its present site in Bramcote, Nottingham, in 1970. One of the key considerations in moving from London was to be near The University of Nottingham and work in collaboration with it. From 2010 the validation partnership was transferred to the University of Chester to allow the introduction of Foundation Degrees. The College is one of five centres which provides teaching for the programmes of the national Centre for Youth Ministry.

The College is located on a spacious campus in the south-western suburbs of Nottingham. The College has currently enrolled 57 full-time and 185 part-time undergraduate students, constituting 106 full-time equivalents (FTE), 12 full-time and 83 part-time taught postgraduate students (33 FTE) and 11 research students. There are 909 extension students, studying by distance learning, some of whom are following the higher education programmes. In addition, there are 55 work-based Youth Ministry students. There are currently two non-EU students.

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

### **The University of Nottingham**

- Certificate in Theology of Ministry (running out)

---

<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).

- BA in Theology of Ministry (year 3)
- MA in Mission and Ministry
- MA in Pastoral Counselling
- PhD

#### **University of Chester**

- Graduate Diploma in Theology
- Foundation Degree in Theology
- BA (top-up) in Theology
- MTh
- MA in Mission and Ministry
- MA in Pastoral Counselling
- MPhil
- PhD

#### **Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry programmes with:**

##### **University of Gloucestershire**

- BA (Hons) in Youth & Community Work and Practical Theology

##### **Staffordshire University**

- BA (Hons) in Young People, Communities and Practical Theology
- BA (Hons) in Children & Family Work and Practical Theology
- BA (Hons) in School, Youth & Community Work and Practical Theology

##### **College self-validated programmes**

- Certificate in Christian Studies
- Advanced Certificate in Christian Studies
- Licentiate in Theology
- Theology Graduates Course

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

The agreement with The University of Nottingham gives responsibility for all aspects of delivery of the undergraduate provision to the College, while monitoring and development of standards and quality are shared. The agreement with the University of Chester is similar. Youth Ministry programmes are organised nationally with four regional centres. The national organisation takes overall responsibility for management and reporting to the awarding bodies, with the College taking responsibility, on a shared basis, for its own contribution to the programmes.

The provision at the College is subject to review and approval under the provisions of the Quality in Formation Framework developed through the cooperation of the Ministry Division of the Church of England, and the Methodist, Baptist Union, and United Reformed churches. This provides a comprehensive review of academic standards and involves benchmarking against similar provision.

## **Recent developments**

The transition from The University of Nottingham to the University of Chester has resulted in the revalidation of the main undergraduate provision as a foundation degree with a BA top-up. A new principal assumed his post shortly before the review took place and has begun the simplification of the structures and processes of the College. In common with

other colleges providing training for ordination, it is now proposed by the Church of England Ministry Division that validation of awards is transferred to the University of Durham.

### **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. A report was compiled on behalf of the student body by a student, based on questionnaire responses and a focus group with full-time students. The team also held a meeting with a representative group of students and took the opportunity to explore in greater depth with them some of the matters raised in the student submission.

## Detailed findings about St John's College Nottingham

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College is in a period of transition. It has recently changed validating partners for main undergraduate and postgraduate awards and has completed only one year of operation under the new arrangements. The responsibilities delegated for managing, enhancing and monitoring standards under this arrangement are similar for both validating Universities.

1.2 The national Centre for Youth Ministry retains managerial oversight of standards for Youth Ministry programmes. It is responsible for reporting to the awarding bodies. The College is responsible only for the quality of its own contribution, principally teaching and first marking of assignments. Compliance with external requirements is achieved through the Academic Board.

1.3 The College is responsible for all aspects of quality assurance and enhancement for the self-accredited extension programmes. This is subject to oversight by the governing body. Equivalence to validated awards is established by using equivalent modules to those of the validated programmes.

1.4 There is a functional but complex structure for the management of academic standards. Overall, the College is managed through its Executive Management Group, chaired by the Principal, on which the Student President also sits. The College's academic portfolio is managed primarily by the Dean of Studies, who chairs the Academic Board. The research programmes are managed by the Director of Research. The Director of Extension Studies manages the distance-learning pathways, the part-time residential MA in Pastoral Counselling and oversees the suite of self-accredited distance learning theology programmes. Day-to-day management and operation of each of the undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes is the responsibility of the programme leader. Reporting is through the Programmes Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Board.

1.5 The current committee and reporting structure is regarded by the College as onerous. The Academic Board has a range of specialist subcommittees concerned with aspects of the provision, including research. An internal quality assurance committee was dissolved two years ago. The present arrangements have resulted in considerable academic and administrative complexity at the College, described in the self-evaluation as 'a frenetic culture' that could have an adverse result on the management of academic standards. The effectiveness of the College committee structures and processes is included in the scope of a review by the incoming Principal to streamline provision, simplify administration and reduce staff overload. It is advisable that the College clarifies management responsibilities and simplifies organisational structures.

1.6 The College has relevant structures to evaluate the effectiveness of its management of academic standards. Students participate in the review and development of programmes and the wider college community, through representation on academic and management committees, through surveys and module feedback. Some long-standing problems, including those of assessment (see paragraphs 1.12, 1.13), have not been resolved and students did not feel that they were always well informed of changes made in response to their participation and feedback. There is scope to provide training and support to student representatives and provide more information to students about actions taken in

response to the issues they raise. It is desirable to strengthen the effectiveness of student representation on College committees.

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

1.7 There is appropriate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure through the requirements of the awarding bodies. Recently validated course documentation and programme specifications make direct reference to *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and subject benchmark statements. Account is taken of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*).

1.8 A key external reference point for the provision is the Church of England Ministry Division, which provides guidance on the content and quality of ministerial training. This includes the Churches' Quality in Formation Process and the Churches' Agreed Learning Outcomes, leading to the ordination and licensing of ministers for the Anglican Church. A Quality in Formation Panel conducts reviews on providers of ministerial training on their behalf. The College last underwent this type of review in 2007 and is due to undergo a review in 2013. There have been some difficulties in responding to issues raised in the last review, especially the reduction of the 'frenetic culture' alluded to in the Ministerial Division inspection of 2007.

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

1.9 In general, the College uses external examiners effectively in the management of academic standards. The College has made appropriate responses to enhance its academic standards. Programme teams implement action plans which are monitored through annual programme reviews. External examiners' discussions with subject teams have led to the enhancement of quality in all aspects of programme and module design.

1.10 The College endeavours to adhere to the awarding bodies' regulations for assessment and is guided by the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. The programme and module handbooks provide information on the programme content, structures and assessment. A system of internal moderation on a sample basis, which is practised consistently, assures that marking conforms to the relevant grading criteria and that detailed feedback is given to students.

1.11 Notwithstanding these processes, there is significant inconsistency in the timeliness of the return of assessed work to students. The awarding body timescales for the return of work are often unmet. This undermines the usefulness of feedback, however carefully constructed, in helping students to plan and improve subsequent work. It is advisable that all staff return marked work, with feedback to students, consistently within the timescale set by the awarding bodies.

1.12 There are other areas of assessment practice which would benefit from more consistency. Reviewers looked at a sample of assessed work. There were some inconsistencies in the linking of intended learning outcomes to assessment tasks, use of marking criteria and feedback to students. In particular, there is a lack of standardisation of marking and feedback by external markers. When internal moderation leads to significant revision of the grade, irrelevant feedback comments from the first marking may remain. Despite awareness of this, from external examiners' reports and student feedback, no improvements appear to have been achieved. In order to address these questions,

it is desirable to involve all external markers in assessment training and standardisation events.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The College is largely effective in managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. The principal structures for managing and reporting are as described in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5. A process of module evaluation is the principal means by which the College gains feedback from staff and students on the quality of learning opportunities. The outcomes of this process are reported to Programmes Committee and inform the annual monitoring of the provision required by the awarding bodies.

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

2.2 The College's policies, processes and practices comply with those of the validating bodies, which in turn are informed by the *Code of practice*. The College has adopted the University of Chester's policies on admissions and work placement. Staff have a working knowledge of the *Code of practice* and have used this to inform internal initiatives.

2.3 The College offers a range of effective placement opportunities. The arrangements sufficiently reflect the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. Students are expected to take placements in challenging and unfamiliar contexts and independent students are given the opportunity to choose contexts more closely aligned with their eventual careers aspirations. The aims and objectives of the placement are set out in a learning agreement, which is developed between the student and the placement provider/supervisor. Both student and supervisor write a report on the placement experience. Placement supervisors receive written guidance. A single member of staff has oversight of developing and maintaining an extensive network of suitable placement providers for both ordinands and independent students. Student feedback is used to inform the selection of placement providers.

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

2.4 The College aspires to a high standard of teaching and learning. There is a teaching and learning strategy that emphasises creativity, community and inclusivity and is clearly related to the vocational requirements of formation and ordination. The strategy is intended to be revised this year in light of recent changes to the leadership of the College.

2.5 Student feedback on the quality of teaching is generally good. The College uses a module evaluation scheme as the principal formal means of gaining feedback. Students find some teaching inspiring and a range of teaching techniques are employed to cater for differences in learning styles. Postgraduate research students explained that their experience of the level of teaching and supervision was very good and directed at the requirements of their individual programme of research.



2.6 The College has a peer observation of teaching scheme that requires all teaching staff to be observed twice a year. The scheme is not currently operating and the team was informed that the new Principal regarded reinstatement during the next academic year as a priority. The team encourages this step in order that the College can assure itself that the quality of teaching is being maintained and that good practice can be identified and shared.

2.7 Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Policy and processes for the appointment of full-time staff are well developed and validating body staff are invited to sit on interview panels. All new members of teaching staff are observed teaching as part of the selection process. Teaching qualifications are not routinely required, but teaching experience is and a proportion of staff have relevant teaching qualifications.

2.8 New staff are inducted into teaching roles by their manager. Although there is a comprehensive induction procedure setting out the responsibilities and requiring sign-off by both staff member and manager, this is not currently being used and more informal inductions are the norm. Students were concerned that sessional staff were not effectively inducted into their roles and that this was evidenced by a variation in the quality of teaching, marking and assessment feedback.

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

2.9 The College has a clear policy and the process by which students applications are received and considered. For externally validated courses, the admissions policy of the University of Chester is used to inform the process. There is a programme of open days and visitor days for potential applicants, which includes opportunities to meet students and staff and tour facilities.

2.10 Not all students feel appropriately prepared for their studies. All applicants are interviewed to identify the appropriate course of study from the wide range of study options available. Admissions tutors take account of applicants' previous academic attainment in making their recommendations. At interview, applicants are invited to disclose and explore any additional support needs that they may have. However, student feedback indicates that the level of support may not always meet expectations. Furthermore, there is evidence, particularly in respect of students admitted with advanced standing, of students struggling with the demands of the course and feeling they are not appropriately prepared for the level of study. It is advisable that the College reviews its provision of information, advice and guidance at the academic induction stage to ensure students are thoroughly, accurately and appropriately advised.

2.11 There is inequity in the provision of tutorial support. Academic and pastoral support is provided for ordinands by means of their membership of a Formation Group which meets each week. The group leader takes the role of personal tutor for each member of the group and will meet with them three times a year to complete an annual report on the formation process, which includes reference to overall academic development. Non-ordinands may elect to join a Formation Group for an additional fee, but in practice have tended not to. A dedicated personal tutor has been appointed for independent students for next academic year. It remains desirable that the College reviews tutorial arrangements to provide equitable and appropriate access to academic guidance and support.

2.12 There is an effective approach to the development of study skills. Support is offered by means of written guidance and reading suggestions and this is supplemented by optional taught sessions during the first term. Particular attention is given to extension studies students, who complete much of their work off site. This includes additional taught sessions and a comprehensive study skills guide.

2.13 The team encourages a more uniformly effective approach to additional learning support. The College makes claims for inclusivity and supports students in being assessed for support needs. Students claimed that there was not always awareness of learning needs and that it was not clear where to access support. Module handbooks contain extensive reading lists that dyslexic students find difficult to navigate. A consultant has been appointed to review the provision of additional learning support.

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

2.14 College arrangements for staff development are currently only partially effective. There is a staff appraisal system linked to teaching observation and staff development planning, but the team learned that this had not been operating systematically for several years. There is a regular informal teachers' meeting which considers teaching and learning issues and also shares areas of good practice, although minutes are not kept. There is a limited programme of professional development. Currently, two days are held each year for in-house staff training and academic year preparation. It is acknowledged that there is a perceived lack of focus concerning professional development, which is not necessarily related to staff needs or institutional priorities. It is desirable to link observation of teaching and appraisal to planned staff development.

2.15 The College values and encourages scholarly research and publication. Faculty members are entitled to one term's study leave after five years' service. The College have noted that this provision has been inconsistent in recent years, particularly for senior staff, with a resultant drop in the number of publications. The Faculty Development Committee oversees some areas of teaching staff development in great detail. In particular, it focuses on awarding study leave and grants for professional memberships and conference attendance, but does not address in-house training or other individual development needs. During discussions, the Principal indicated that a simpler and more effective scheme was under consideration. The College is advised to develop a simplified and more strategic approach to staff development as a whole.

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

2.16 College management of resources generally meets student expectations. The College offers residential accommodation, dining facilities, a library, chapel, lecture and teaching rooms that the students regard as sufficient for their needs in meeting the learning outcomes of their courses. The College has a development plan for the building of a new Learning Resource Centre, which will allow for an expansion and upgrade to the current facilities. The College is addressing student concerns that facilities do not all comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, but the timescale of improvements has not always met student expectations.

2.17 There are good library facilities. A Library Committee, which includes student representation, meets each term and provides a forum for the development of policy to ensure the best use of the resources available. Students state that the library staff are proactive in responding to student needs through acquisitions and electronic resources and in directing students to new publications aligned with their academic requirements and research interests. Library staff provide support for study skills. The College has also developed a range of digital and multimedia resources, designed to support extension students but available to all. The additional support for students provided by proactive library staff and access to online resources is considered to be good practice.

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 uses an extensive range of mechanisms to communicate public information to students and other stakeholders. This includes the website, social media, a virtual learning environment and printed materials.

3.2 Pre-entry and induction information is comprehensive and accurate. The website and a range of printed leaflets, publicity flyers, prospectus and newsletters provide comprehensive information to prospective entrants. The students confirmed the quality of information, but felt that improvements could be made, particularly in relation to verbal information given to students with special needs and those with 'advanced standing'. Some students indicated that course modules and options were unclear. A clear, graphical portrayal of pathways and options would assist student understanding.

3.3 Programme information is sufficient. Programme and module handbooks are issued in hard copy to all students, and academic staff support students in their use. There are some variations in the content and structure of handbooks, particularly as some rely on links to awarding bodies' information, which students did not find accessible. With the move to the new awarding body, the overall College Handbook has ceased to exist, and both staff and students would welcome its reintroduction. There is a comprehensive Staff Handbook for all staff, setting out expectations of communication, conduct and health and safety, and cross referenced to a range of College policies. Placements are supported by appropriate guidance for students and providers.

3.4 The College use of external online media is good. The main website contains highly detailed information on the programmes available, day conferences and summer schools, College facilities, teaching staff and other information useful to prospective students and College users. The College 'video timeline project' website contains many useful video interviews with distinguished scholars on a variety of theological topics, providing good teaching resources.

3.5 The virtual learning environment, which has been introduced in the current academic year, varies noticeably between modules. Faculty use this mainly for distribution of learning materials for all programmes and there is little evidence of its use for discussion and other learning enhancement at this stage. Staff recognised that further training and development in its use are needed.

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

3.6 The College has a functional system to ensure the accuracy of the online and printed information that it currently provides. Responsibility is shared by the Dean of Studies, the Development Director and specific departmental directors. The College works to the guidelines provided by its awarding bodies and the University of Chester maintains its own

website as the definitive source of academic information. Information issued by the College on their behalf is approved by their awarding bodies. All documents produced by the College are independently proofread. Student feedback is sought and used to improve the website and other information.

3.7 There is no overall mechanism for assuring the quality of information and communications or improving their effectiveness. The College recognises the need to improve the style and content of its communications. While current systems operate satisfactorily, there is a need to clarify both responsibilities for and the processes by which the integrity of all College communications are assured. It is desirable that the College implements a formal policy to ensure accuracy, completeness and consistency of all public information.

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>

St John's College Nottingham action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight June 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 additional support for students provided by proactive library staff and access to online resources (paragraphs 2.17 and 3.4).</li> </ul>	Highlight good practice in library and online resourcing in 2013-14 Prospectus, on website and in other publicity materials	Web promotion by 1/10/12  2013-14 Prospectus and other hard copy publicity by 22/2/13	Librarian, Information Technology Manager and Development Director  Librarian, Admissions Team and Development Director	Appearance on website home page  Production of hard copy publicity for 2013-14	Executive Management Group  Executive Management Group	Assessment of hits on library and online resources link from home page, initial evaluation by 31/12/12  Executive Management Group to review publicity at meeting on 25/2/13
	Incorporate this identification of good practice into fundraising campaign for new Learning Resource	19/10/12 such as after next meeting of Learning Resource Centre Fundraising	Development Director and Learning Resource Council Fundraising	Effective fundraising for Learning Resource Council which meets targets set by	Executive Management Group and Council	Learning Resource Council Fundraising Group to monitor income and support for

<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 bodies.

	Centre	Group	Group	Fundraising Group		Learning Resource Council project at each meeting  Executive Management Group to review once per term from January 2013
<b>Advisable</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>advisable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarify management responsibilities and simplify organisational structures (paragraphs 1.5 and 1.8)</li> </ul>	Principal governance and staff restructuring proposals were approved by Council on 16/7/12	New Executive Management Group-Council reporting processes to be implemented from 1/10/12  Staff restructuring to include appointment of	Principal  Principal and Standing Committee (the latter being	Presentation of integrated, strategic and task-oriented Executive Management Group reports to Council, rather than diverse descriptive reports from Heads of Entities  Newly structured staff team in place for academic year	Council, as recipient of Executive Management Group reports  Standing Committee	Executive Management Group and Council to review effectiveness of new reporting procedures at their respective meetings in summer term of 2013  Staff restructuring to be reviewed and evaluated by Executive

		Chaplain/Liturgist and Communications Director, and to enable integrated management of on-site and distance learning under single Academic Dean/Director of Studies, to be completed by 31/7/13	responsible particularly for employment issues)	2013-14 (such as 1/10/13)		Management Group and Standing Committee before 31/12/13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>return marked work, with feedback to students, consistently within the timescale set by the awarding bodies (paragraph 1.11)</li> </ul>	New Registrar to tighten monitoring of assessment turnaround, reminding faculty more regularly of impending deadlines, and chasing late marking immediately if a deadline is missed	New procedure in place from 1/10/12	Registrar in conjunction with Faculty and associate tutors	Late marking eliminated or significantly reduced	Principal and Academic Board	Comparative analysis of 2011-12 and 2012-13 turnaround to be presented by Registrar to Academic Board on 3/12/12 and 11/3/13, and to Chester Assessment Board 13/6/13  Termly reports to follow thereafter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve the provision of information, advice and</li> </ul>	Ensure preparatory materials for incoming students' Induction Module are	Materials for 2012-13 induction in mid-September were	Admissions Team and Induction Module leaders	Materials received, read and understood by incoming	Academic Development Group	Academic Development Group to review induction week

<p>guidance at the admissions stage (paragraphs 2.10 and 3.2)</p>	<p>circulated at least one month in advance</p> <p>Provide each student with written confirmation of their personal learning pathway (detailing award, modules, assessments and so on) no more than one month after their place is confirmed; copy this document to their Personal Tutor</p>	<p>circulated in mid-August</p> <p>All incoming students for 2013-14 to be provided with personalised written learning pathways by 30/8/13</p>	<p>Dean of Studies and Registry Team</p>	<p>students</p> <p>Personal learning pathways received, read and understood by incoming students</p>	<p>Programmes Committee</p> <p>Academic Development Group</p>	<p>from faculty/staff perspective by 19/10/12</p> <p>Programmes Committee to review student feedback forms on Induction Module at its meeting on 9/11/12</p> <p>Admissions Team to canvass feedback on incoming students' understanding of personal learning pathways and to report to Academic Development Group by 1/12/13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a simplified and more strategic approach to staff development (paragraph 2.15).</li> </ul>	<p>Produce and begin implementing a schedule for faculty study leave, based on one term's leave for research and writing in every five years of service</p>	<p>1/10/12</p>	<p>Principal</p>	<p>Faculty take study leave as scheduled and produce accredited and/or published work resulting from it</p>	<p>Principal, other faculty line managers and Faculty Development Committee</p>	<p>Faculty to submit research and publication proposal to Principal before being granted study leave</p> <p>If Faculty</p>



	Implement a structured programme of staff in-service training, entailing at least one session per term	Programme to be published by 19/10/12  First session to be held before 14/12/12	Principal, with Deans as appropriate	Programme implemented and eliciting positive feedback	Executive Management Group and Council	<p>member's Line Manager is not the Principal, a copy of the proposal to be lodged with them</p> <p>Principal to monitor publications resulting from study leave, leading to a comparative study of output contrasting 2010-12 with 2013-15, to be conducted summer 2015</p> <p>Feedback forms to be completed by all taking part in training sessions These forms to be analysed, with results reported to Executive Management Group and Council by 31/7/13 and adjustments made to following</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:						year's programme as appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen the effectiveness of student representation on College committees (paragraph 1.6)</li> </ul>	<p>Conduct consultation with Senior Student and Student Committee members on increasing student representation</p> <p>Implement changes to student membership of college committees as appropriate</p>	<p>Consultation to commence by 19/10/12</p> <p>By 7/1/13</p>	<p>Deans</p> <p>Deans</p>	<p>Agreement between Faculty and Student Committee on changes</p> <p>Positive feedback from Senior Student and Student Committee on increased enfranchisement</p>	<p>Principal, Executive Management Group and Council</p> <p>Principal, Executive Management Group and Council</p>	<p>Senior Student and Deans to present evaluation of initial consultation and subsequent implementation to Executive Management Group by 30/6/13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>involve all external markers in College assessment training and standardisation</li> </ul>	Devise and implement programme of joint faculty/associate tutor assessment workshops	<p>Programme to be published by 14/12/12</p> <p>First workshop to be held before 22/3/13</p>	Dean of Studies with Registrar	Programme established with good external assessor attendance by 31/7/13	Academic Board	Feedback forms submitted by those attending assessment workshops, analysed by Registrar, with

events (paragraphs 1.12 and 2.8)						results reviewed by Academic Board Dean of Studies to adjust programme in response as appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>link observation of teaching and appraisal to planned staff development (paragraphs 2.6, 2.14)</li> </ul>	Devise and implement programme and pro forma for faculty teaching peer review, based on pairing and ongoing dialogue	Programme and pro forma to be circulated by 19/10/12	Principal with Dean of Studies	Mutual review taking place as per programme  Improved student feedback on teaching	Tutors' Meeting  Programmes Committee	Student feedback forms about teaching, as evaluated at Programmes Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review tutorial arrangements to provide equitable and appropriate access to academic guidance and support (paragraph 2.11)</li> </ul>	Dedicated tutor for independent students was confirmed at Council on 16/7/12  Module Leaders to ensure equitable and appropriate academic guidance and support for non-ordinands	Arrangement will commence 17/9/12  Monitoring to begin 17/9/12	Tutor for independent students  Module Leaders	Positive feedback from independent students  Positive feedback from independent students	Tutors' meeting and Executive Management Group  Tutors' meeting and Executive Management Group	Independent Student representative to monitor and elicit feedback on new arrangements and report results to Executive Management Group via senior student before 31/7/13  Independent student representative to monitor and elicit feedback on new arrangements and

	studying on their modules					report results to Executive Management Group through senior student before 31/7/13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement a formal policy to ensure accuracy, completeness and consistency of all public information (paragraph 3.7).</li> </ul>	<p>Principal's proposal that this be addressed in the first instance by a new Strategy Group was accepted by Council on 16/7/12</p> <p>Principal's proposal that this be overseen in the longer term by a new Director of Communications was accepted by Council on 16/7/12</p>	<p>Strategy Group to be convened by 19/10/12</p> <p>Director of Communications to be appointed by 31/7/13</p>	<p>Principal in conjunction with new Strategy Group</p> <p>Principal and Standing Committee (as particularly responsible for deployment)</p>	<p>Production of accurate, complete and consistent public information</p> <p>Appointment of Director of Communications by 31/7/13, and effective integration of public information by the appointee, building on work of Strategy Group</p>	<p>Executive Management Group and Council</p> <p>Executive Management Group and Council</p>	<p>To be evaluated by Bishops' Inspection Panel in February 2013 and by Council before 31/7/13</p> <p>Regular Appraisals by Director of Communication's line manager (Principal)</p>

## 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: *The*

---

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

*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 1036 09/12

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Fax 01452 557070  
Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 698 9

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786