Bristol Baptist College

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

June 2012

Key findings about Bristol Baptist College

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 Bristol, the 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 active role students play in the management of academic standards and in the annual monitoring of programmes (paragraphs 1.4, 1.5 and 2.2)
- the inclusive academic tutorial and pastoral support systems, which engage students irrespective of pathway or mode of study (paragraph 2.12).

Recommendations

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

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

- return marked work, with feedback to students, consistently within the timescale recommended by the awarding body (paragraph 1.10)
- introduce more rigorous briefing and monitoring for placement providers (paragraph 2.5).

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

- involve all external markers in College assessment training and standardisation events (paragraph 1.9)
- link observation of teaching and appraisal to planned staff development (paragraphs 2.9 and 2.15)
- review and implement the draft policy on public information (paragraph 3.6).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Bristol Baptist College (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 Bristol, the 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](#)*.[2] 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
- Baptist Union of Great Britain competences.

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

Bristol Baptist College dates its beginnings to 1679. An endowment provided a teacher to prepare men for ministry in Baptist churches, following the closure of the English universities to Dissenters after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Therefore, the College is the oldest surviving free church college in the world. It has been housed on a number of sites in Bristol and, since 1998, has been based at Duncan House, Clifton; a Georgian building on five floors. The College and Trinity College Bristol agreed to integrate their provisions in the mid 1990s, with the most recent formal agreement dated 2005. They operate jointly with regard to most of the teaching and other educational activities at the two institutions, with Trinity College Bristol effectively running the academic arrangements for both colleges. The Baptist College independently provides teaching for the national Youth Ministry programme.

Most educational activities take place at Duncan House, though much teaching takes place at Trinity College, situated about 1.5 miles away across the Clifton Downs, and occasionally Youth Ministry teaching takes place at other venues in Bristol and elsewhere. The combined enrolment of undergraduate students on the joint programmes in 2011-12 is 166. Of these, seven full-time and 26 part-time undergraduate students, constituting 20 full-time equivalents (FTE), are registered with the College. Of the 49 students studying taught postgraduate courses, two full-time and six part-time students (5 FTE) are enrolled there. There are three postgraduate research students studying at the College. In addition, there are 47 work-based students on Youth Ministry courses. There are four international students studying at the College.

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

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

University of Bristol
- Certificate in Theology
- Diploma in Theology
- BA (Hons) in Theology
- Graduate Diploma in Theology
- MA in Theology
- MLitt
- MPhil
- PhD

Bristol Centre for Youth Ministry programmes with:

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

University of Gloucestershire
- BA (Hons) in Youth and Community Work and Practical Theology
- BA (Hons) in Youth Studies and Applied Theology

The provider's stated responsibilities

On University of Bristol validated-awards, the College, working with Trinity College Bristol, has full responsibility for curriculum, assessment, teaching, learning and student support, with the monitoring of quality and standards being shared with the awarding body. Youth Ministry programmes are organised nationally with five 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, principally teaching and first marking of assignments.

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 provision has been broadly stable in recent years, with some expansion due to Youth Ministry teaching. A new Academic Dean has recently been appointed to lead the joint academic work of the partnership with Trinity 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 be 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. It did not prove possible for students to develop and present

a submission in the time available. The team met a cross section of students from undergraduate to postgraduate level, representing ordinands, lay ministers and independent students. The lively meeting provided helpful insights about the programmes.

Detailed findings about Bristol Baptist College

1 Academic standards

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

1.1   The College fulfils its responsibilities for the management of academic standards effectively. It delivers theological programmes in conjunction with Trinity College Bristol, covered by a memorandum of agreement, with Trinity College effectively responsible for the academic arrangements of both colleges. Responsibilities for academic standards are clearly delineated and understood within the colleges. The University of Bristol retains responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of the quality of its awards, while the colleges are responsible for all aspects of operation and delivery.

1.2   The national organisation for Youth Ministry retains managerial oversight of standards for Youth Ministry programmes. It is responsible for reporting to the University of Gloucestershire and Staffordshire University. The College is responsible for the quality of its own contribution, principally teaching and first marking of assignments. Effective compliance with external requirements is achieved through the Board of Studies.

1.3   Management and reporting arrangements for academic standards are clear and efficient. The College is managed by the Principal and College Leadership Team reporting to the College Council and its Education Committee. There are Ministerial and Youth Ministry academic teams who report to the Leadership Team. The joint provision at the two colleges is coordinated by an Academic Dean based at Trinity College. Management and operation of each of the undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes is the responsibility of a programme director, with each unit being coordinated by a convenor.

1.4   The College's academic portfolio is overseen effectively by a joint Academic Board, which reports regularly to the College Council Education Committee. The joint Academic Board meets three times a year, chaired by the Academic Dean, with a student representative from each college in attendance. Students also sit on the Teaching and Learning Committee, a subcommittee of the joint Academic Board, which reviews the operation of programmes. Through these means, it is intended that students play a key role in the College's academic standards.

1.5   The oversight of academic standards is effectively evaluated through the annual monitoring process. Annual programme reports are made, following a University of Bristol checklist. Each takes account of student evaluations, staff responses, some analysis of progression and achievement statistics and external examiners' reports. They are considered at the Colleges' joint Annual Monitoring Review Meeting prior to reporting to the University. Action plans are drawn up and effectively monitored. A sample of units is evaluated each academic year by a Level Evaluation Committee. Each committee contains a representative sample of students engaged on units at that level, including taught master's awards. Postgraduate research programmes are similarly evaluated. The active role students play in the management of academic standards and in annual monitoring of programmes is good practice.

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

1.6   The College complies effectively with external reference points it uses. It has embedded relevant parts of the Academic Infrastructure into its programmes. All academic

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awards reflect *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and relevant subject benchmark statements. The Colleges have jointly conducted a recent internal three-year curriculum review, which assured the use of programme specifications and relevant sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*) as well as compliance with University systems. The College implements the provisions of the University of Bristol's comprehensive Process Manual of Theological Colleges, which was compiled with strong involvement from the colleges.

1.7   A key external reference point for the provision is the Churches' Quality in Formation Framework, which provides guidance on the content and quality of ministerial training. An additional reference is the Baptist Union of Great Britain competencies, leading to the licensing of ministers for the Baptist Church.

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

1.8   The College uses external moderation effectively to assure academic standards. All aspects of assessment, including assessment design, marking and internal verification and responding to student feedback are the responsibility of the College. External examiners' reports are received by the joint Teaching and Learning Committee and discussed at programme committees. The College makes appropriate responses to enhance its academic standards.

1.9   Assessment is in most cases well organised. The College formally adheres to the University of Bristol regulations for assessment and is guided by the *Code of practice*, *Section 6: Assessment of students*. It has established appropriate systems for the internal moderation of assessment. Marking is undertaken by College staff and a number of external markers. Extensive guidance is provided on anonymous marking and marking differentials at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Marking criteria are clear and staff feedback to students is generally linked to intended learning outcomes. External examiners have reminded faculty to moderate assessment tasks and use the marking scheme in feedback to students. There is a concern remaining that external markers do not always sufficiently adhere to the guidance provided, which leads to variations in practice. It is desirable that the College involves all external markers in College assessment training and standardisation events.

1.10   Not all internal or external markers observe the timescales for the return of student work established by the University of Bristol. This is related to bunching of hand-in dates, which creates excessive workloads for staff and students. It also results in the granting of extensions to student deadlines to deal with this, which can have an adverse impact on student equity. The College is addressing the scheduling of assessment dates. It remains advisable that College staff return marked work, with feedback to students, consistently within the timescale recommended by the awarding body.

1.11   The effectiveness of assessment is evaluated by student feedback through unit evaluations and participation on committees. Good practice is shared through faculty meetings and teaching and learning workshops.

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.

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   Management and reporting systems for learning opportunities are substantially the same as those outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5. Responsibility for teaching quality, staff development and resources are shared Trinity College Bristol, while pastoral support and liaison with employers is the sole responsibility of each individual college. Annual Programme Review is the focus for reporting on the quality of learning opportunities and recording and monitoring of any necessary actions. Additionally, an annual report is submitted to the College Council by the Teaching and Learning Committee giving a qualitative appraisal of learning opportunities, including student/staff liaison, placement and staff development.

2.2   There is a formal system of student representation with a student president and campus executive. There are regular formal and informal meetings with staff representatives and the Principal. Students are positive about the responsive and mutually supportive nature of their small collegiate community, but felt their needs were sometimes overlooked in the wider joint academic endeavour.

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

2.3   As stated in paragraph 1.6, the College takes appropriate account of most relevant sections of the *Code of practice* and relevant Church requirements.

2.4   The College offers a minimum of two placement opportunities for full-time students, as well as students in congregation and urban mission based programmes of study. To establish the application of theory to practice, ministerial candidates on undergraduate and postgraduate, congregation-based and college-based courses are required to undertake work in situations outside their usual field of operation. The aims and objectives of the placement are set out in a comprehensive Placement Handbook, which includes guidance for both students and supervisors.

2.5   There is a specified member of staff who oversees all placement activity. While monitoring visits are undertaken to placement providers for block placement, community placements that involve students working voluntarily within a wide range of secular contexts are less well monitored. Sometimes there is no contact with or oversight of the placement. Furthermore, the briefing of placement providers is not consistent and some providers feel that a greater level of contact would be beneficial. There is further scope for the provision to align with the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning.* It is advisable that the College introduces more rigorous briefing and monitoring for placement providers.

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

2.6   The College has generally effective mechanisms to assure the quality of teaching. The teaching and learning strategy is closely related to the aims of the College, which emphasise mission for different forms of Christian ministry. This has informed the development of innovative pathways, such as the urban mission route for congregation–based study that recognises the ambitions of the denomination within challenging contexts.

2.7   Teaching is delivered by a joint team comprising staff from both partner colleges. Staff are appropriately qualified in relation to the level of course on which they are deployed. The majority of staff are qualified to doctoral level, which is a requirement for all staff teaching at level 6 or above.

2.8   Student feedback on the quality of teaching is varied. Students confirm that teaching is adequate, but not always inspirational. Most teaching in college is lecture and seminar-based and, although there is a variety in assessment tasks, it was not evident that different learning styles were being addressed through the delivery of the curriculum.

2.9   Peer observation of teaching does not currently play a sufficient role in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning. A scheme has been in existence for several years, following the policies and procedure of the University of Bristol. The scheme has not been consistently implemented, due to staff changes, and it is not linked, due to its emphasis on personal enhancement, to either staff appraisal or the overall planning processes for staff development or scholarship.

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

2.10   The College offers a range of courses that respond to the needs of a diverse student group. Overall, student numbers are low and the number of students following exactly the same pathway and programme is small. Staff interview all students prior to admission, with external panel members for ordinands. The College aims to create individual programmes of study in discussion with each student in response to their previous academic and theological experience and in relation to their careers aspirations. The admissions process for Youth Ministry students is coordinated nationally. All students attend an interview and a series of selection activities prior to being accepted on the course.

2.11   Appropriate arrangements are made for induction. Currently, an introductory week includes sessions to introduce the academic, formational and community aspects of the provision, including initial study skills. Sessions are supported by a comprehensive welcome pack, and a College student handbook. Separate information is provided for Youth Ministry students. The College seeks student evaluation of the induction week in order to inform future planning.

2.12   All students are allocated a personal tutor who is responsible for both academic and pastoral matters. Regular meetings are scheduled for academic and personal development. Gaps in the provision, for example for independent taught postgraduate students, have recently been recognised and addressed through the allocation of an additional tutor. Further pastoral support is available for all students from a part-time Chaplain. The inclusive academic tutorial and pastoral support systems, which engage students irrespective of pathway or mode of study, are good practice.

2.13   Students who self-declare learning needs have access to diagnostic screening and additional language and skills support, including English as a second language. More generally, study skills are supported in student handbooks, with materials on the virtual learning environment. Additional support is available in the form of optional formative feedback on essay drafts and one-to-one support by request. Students feel well supported in the development of their study skills.

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

2.14   The College has a thorough joint programme, with Trinity College, of relevant training. Development days aimed at sharing good practice are held for all faculty four or five times per year. Topics within the last year have included sessions on supporting dyslexia, marking and assessment, use of the virtual learning environment and detecting plagiarism. Additional in-college sessions on teaching and learning include part-time and Youth Ministry staff.

2.15   There is a regular programme of annual appraisals in operation, but implementation of the peer observation policy is inconsistent. There is currently little integration between these, peer observations, and staff training. The Academic Dean has recently produced a draft staff development policy, in order to provide a stronger alignment. It is desirable that the College links observation of teaching and appraisal to planned staff development.

2.16   New staff are selected and inducted effectively into teaching roles. Representatives from the awarding bodies and from both partner colleges sit on interview and appointments panels. A teaching presentation is part of the selection process and students are invited to attend and give feedback. There is a clear and appropriate induction procedure for new staff, with relevant handbooks issued. New teachers without a formal pedagogic qualification are required to attend suitable training at the University of Bristol.

2.17   There is effective support for scholarship. Staff publications evidence the College's encouragement for scholarly research. Scholarship is supported by the provision of a study day every week for staff. Faculty members are entitled to one term's study leave after five years' service, with the possibility of financial support towards sabbatical costs, and an annual study week. There is funding for professional conference attendance.

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

2.18   Student access to resources is appropriate. The College provides teaching accommodation, refectory and library facilities in its substantial building. In addition, students have full access to the facilities at the partner Trinity College, where many of their courses are delivered.

2.19   The library facilities are good and provide some study space and IT resources. The book stock is closely aligned with course reading lists, supplemented by journals and an important archive of historical materials. Library staff liaise closely with staff at Trinity College in order to maximise the effectiveness of the resource and produce study support guides.

2.20   There is a developing use of electronic resources. A virtual learning environment is shared with Trinity College, which provides students with access to learning materials. Students stated that this was effective. Staff have received training and been given guidance on how to use electronic media to support the teaching of units and the required information that should be uploaded. The virtual learning environment is not currently used for discussion forums. Students commented that more initial guidance on using the resource would be helpful. The College is encouraged to continue its development of the virtual learning environment.

2.21   The College uses a variety of means to gather student feedback on learning resources. As well as specific unit evaluation and level evaluation, there are regular

meetings that provide a forum for students and staff to evaluate the physical and community aspects of College life.

> 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 effective mechanisms to communicate public information to students and other stakeholders. These include the College website, prospectus, information sheets and other printed promotional and fundraising materials. College staff and students use a virtual learning environment which is shared with Trinity College. In addition, there is a restricted-access intranet. Youth Ministry students access the 'MyCYM' virtual learning environment.

3.2   Information for students is sufficiently comprehensive. Students confirmed that pre-enrolment information provided, particularly during the interview process, was clear, accurate, wide-ranging and helpful. There is a comprehensive induction programme, partially shared with Trinity students, during which students receive full programme and College information. Internal communication from the College to the students is good with regular communication with tutors and from the College Manager. Students indicated that at times they are omitted from information given to Trinity students at formal lunch-time arrangements, and feel that their unique identity is sometimes overlooked.

3.3   The shared virtual learning environment provides the main means of academic communication to current students and staff. It provides timetables, College and programme handbooks and an extensive range of teaching and learning material for all courses. There is a dedicated section for the College students, a staff area containing marking resources, and the University of Bristol Process Manual and regulations. The intranet provides specific information for the College students.

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

3.4   The College ensures that public information is accurate and complete. The College Manager has overall responsibility for this, including the website, production of the prospectus and monitoring the virtual learning environment. Specific course information is discussed with appropriate academic staff. Academic information is cross-checked by the Academic Dean (at Trinity College) and is signed off by the College Leadership Team.

3.5   Academic information is approved by the relevant university. Publicity, promotional, programme information, as well as use of the university's name or logo, are submitted for approval to the awarding body prior to publication. Educational programmes, where appropriate, are identified as awards offered by the University and under its authority.

3.6   All documentation is subject to regular internal review. In practice, this has been insufficiently rigorous. The team noted out-of-date information on the website regarding the Youth Ministry course, which has since been corrected. The College does not currently seek

student feedback to inform the accuracy of information. A draft policy on public information has recently been produced by the College Manager. It is desirable that the College reviews and implements the draft policy on 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[3]

Bristol Baptist College 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 **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the active role students play in the management of academic standards and in the annual monitoring of programmes (paragraphs 1.4, 1.5 and 2.2)	Establish a formal process and written documentation reporting back to students the outcomes of student feedback received through the academic year Circular letter to students/Student House Executive in penultimate week of teaching in academic year, acknowledging student feedback and explaining new process (information also in the Handbook	June 2013 Week five of subsequent academic year	Academic Dean in collaboration with College's Directors of Studies and undergraduate/ part-time/ postgraduate taught/ postgraduate research administrators	Increased student satisfaction evident in feedback Improved student-staff-faculty relationships evident from feedback Positive feedback through Student Executive and student representatives on board meetings	Teaching and Learning Committee Academic Board College Student House Executive	By Student House Executive report to Joint Senior Management Team Joint faculty meeting Normal cycle of student feedback

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[3] The provider has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the provider's awarding bodies.

	and virtual learning environment)					
• the inclusive academic tutorial and pastoral support systems which engage students irrespective of pathway or mode of study (paragraph 2.12).	Ensure consistency and frequency of tutorial meetings across all programmes Good practice shared at College team meetings	Summer 2013 Summer 2013	All tutors All tutors	Reports of meetings brought to team meetings	Education Committee	Through end-of-year/programme evaluation from students and tutor/House Executive meetings
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• return marked work, with feedback to students, consistently within the timescale recommended by the awarding body (paragraph 1.10)	Formal review of assessment deadlines to avoid bunching of hand-in dates Clearer communication regarding return dates for marking Early recruitment and training of external markers at teaching and learning workshops	June 2013 September 2012 October 2012/January 2013	Undergraduate Administrator, Academic Dean Academic Dean Academic Dean	No bunching of deadlines Revised Handbooks and virtual learning environment information 'Slack' in the system, marking consistently returned within five weeks,	Students and Faculty Education Committee	Student feedback Monitoring and recording through Undergraduate Administrator Teaching and Learning Committee receives marking records

	Establish early-warning-system to anticipate and plan for pressure points	October 2012	Academic Dean, Directors of Studies, undergraduate, postgraduate and taught postgraduate administrators	pressure points relieved through competent external markers		
	Establish automatic recall procedure when marking deadlines have been breached	January 2013				
• introduce more rigorous briefing and monitoring for placement providers (paragraph 2.5).	Institute a new administrative process for placements, including revised information for placement providers	December 2012	College Manager/ Director of Pastoral Studies	Evidence of completed paperwork relating to placements	Ministerial team meeting Education Commmittee	End of year review by team Feedback from students and placement providers
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• involve all external markers in College assessment training and standardisation events (paragraph 1.9)	Early recruitment of external markers External markers attend teaching and learning workshops	October 2012/January 2013	Academic Dean, Director of Studies	Consistency of marking evidenced from marking records and student feedback	Students and Faculty	Teaching and Learning Committee receives marking records and student feedback on external marking
• link observation of teaching and appraisal to planned staff development (paragraphs	Establish reliable process to ensure that relevant staff undergo peer review of teaching	Summer 2013	Academic Dean	Records of peer observation and tutor responses Good practice shared at Faculty	Teaching and Learning Committee Team meeting Joint Senior	Peer observations completed and staff development priorities reviewed annually by the

2.9 and 2.15)	Revise joint colleges' staff development concept paper into a clear staff development policy linked to faculty appraisal and strategic academic needs of institutions	December 2012	Academic Dean with Joint Senior Management Team	Meetings Policy brought to Education Committee for discussion	Management Team College Council	Academic Board
	Integrate peer review with staff development through tutor development review process	Summer 2013	Principal	Tutor's development review response	Education Committee	Annual development review process
• review and implement the draft policy on public information (paragraph 3.6).	Review draft policy at College team meeting in autumn 2012 Implement policy	End November 2012 January 2013	College team meeting	Evidence in notes of team meeting Policy issued to all staff	College Council	End of year review Student feedback

About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks:

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

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

highly trusted sponsor An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

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

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

programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

programme specifications Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes of study**, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

provider An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

quality See **academic quality**.

subject benchmark statement A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

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

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