



College of Advanced Studies Ltd

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

October 2013

Key findings about the College of Advanced Studies

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in October 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **limited confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of ATHE, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, and the Institute of Administrative Management.

The team also considers that there can be **no 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 organisations.

The team considers that reliance **cannot** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Recommendations

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

The team considers that it is **essential** for the College to:

- ensure it has effective processes for the approval and introduction of new programmes (paragraph 1.2)
- improve the effectiveness of its strategic oversight of its higher education provision (paragraph 2.1)
- implement an effective mechanism for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy (paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4).

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

- use the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to develop effective policies and procedures to support the delivery of the provision (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.2)
- improve the mechanisms for safeguarding academic standards (paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6)
- improve the effectiveness of its oversight of teaching and learning (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4)
- implement an effective staff development policy (paragraph 2.6)
- improve its mechanisms for allocating resources (paragraph 2.8).

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

- continue to develop the virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.2).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the College of Advanced Studies Ltd (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College 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 College delivers on behalf of ATHE, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, and the Institute of Administrative Management. The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Mr Mark Langley and Mrs Maz Stewart (reviewers) and Dr Peter Steer (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the College, meetings with staff and a separate meeting with students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- the National Qualifications Framework.

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

The College is located in the Whitechapel area of London and was incorporated in 2010. It began accepting applications at the beginning of 2011 and enrolled 87 students in the academic year 2010-11. The College mission statement covers several areas, including to 'serve the needs of the individual, the enterprises and the communities from which our students originate.' Almost all students are from outside the European Union. The College occupies three self-contained floors within shared commercial premises.

The College has a single director. The Principal, who is responsible to the Director, has primary responsibility for academic matters with the tutors reporting to him. The Head of Admissions oversees enrolment and the recording of student progression. Enrolment in the academic year 2013-14 totals 420. All students are full-time and funded privately.

At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath the awarding organisations and with student numbers in brackets:

ATHE

- Extended Diploma in Management - level 4 (28)
- Extended Diploma in Management - level 5 (31)
- Diploma in Management - level 6 (36)
- Diploma in Strategic Management - level 7 (53)
- Diploma in Healthcare Management - level 7 (4)

Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH)

- Diploma in Tourism Management - level 4 (3)

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

² www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

Institute of Administrative Management (IAM)

- Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management - level 6 (265)

The College's stated responsibilities

The College has the responsibility for recruitment and admissions and also for the provision of resources, teaching and student support to deliver the awards. On the ATHE awards, the College uses the assessments recommended by the awarding organisation. It has responsibility for first marking, internal verification, and feedback to students. ATHE undertakes external moderation of the work. The College only undertakes first marking and providing feedback to students on the level 6 Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management. The College only provides formative feedback to students on the level 4 Diploma in Tourism Management. CTH sets and marks the summative assessments. While the awarding organisations provide some of the programme-level information for students, the main responsibility for public information lies with the College.

Recent developments

The College underwent a review visit in October 2012. Since then, the number of students has increased considerably with 420 enrolled for the academic year 2013-14 compared with 177 in 2012-13. The level 7 Diploma in Healthcare Management and the Diploma in Tourism Management are no longer recruiting. Recruitment onto the level 5 Extended Diploma in Management, which was stopped, has been reopened recently to allow the transfer of some students from the HND Business Management.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team but did not do so. Students met the team during the review. Their involvement was helpful for the team and provided an insight into a number of topics, including the quality of teaching and student support.

Detailed findings about College of Advanced Studies Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Quality Assurance Committee is the overarching committee responsible for academic standards. In response to the action plan in the 2012 review report, it has improved only some aspects of its oversight of the provision. The expanded Committee membership includes one student representative and one tutor in addition to the Director, the Principal (Chair), the Head of Admissions and the Head of Centre and Marketing. There are revised terms of reference and the Committee meets monthly with a detailed agenda template, although the minutes of the meetings show a strong operational rather than strategic focus concerning academic matters. Academic decisions and guidance are delegated to the Principal, who is Head of the Academic Division. The Academic Division meets monthly and is responsible for maintaining the quality of the programme delivery. Quality assurance policies and procedures are set out in the Quality Assurance Handbook. The College states that its policies are to be reviewed at least once a year in response to emerging issues from annual reviews, accreditation bodies, and staff and student feedback. While the appeals policy has been updated and the programme annual review process has been modified, the team found little evidence of other policy reviews undertaken either executively or by the Quality Assurance Committee.

1.2 The oversight of new programmes is weak. The College introduced a new HND in Business Management in January 2013. For this programme, the College is responsible for the design and verification of assignment briefs. However, 15 students who registered in January and April 2013 for the HND Business Management received no summative assignments, demonstrating a lack of rigour in planning and oversight of programme delivery. Students accumulated no academic credit during, in some cases, their nine months of study. The Quality Assurance Committee decided to close the programme at its September 2013 meeting. Students were offered registration on the ATHE level 5 Extended Diploma in Management or transfer to another college without financial loss. The ATHE programme, which had been closed to new admissions, was reopened to enable students from the HND programme to transfer. Programme approval processes are not sufficiently robust to plan and implement the effective introduction of the HND. It is **essential** for the College to ensure it has effective processes for the approval and introduction of new programmes.

How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.3 The College makes only limited use of its external reference points. Regular contacts with the awarding organisations ensure a proper understanding of the requirements of the Qualifications and Credit Framework and the National Qualifications Framework. The College acknowledges that it has not made effective use of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) to ensure that all of its policies and procedures are aligned to the relevant chapters. For example, programme reviews lack detail and evaluation. Because the programme review process also lacks other features, for example the use of external benchmarks, it is not fully aligned with the Quality Code, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*. The College has not effectively acted on the advisable recommendation in the previous review to make more effective use of the guidance now included in the Quality Code. Aspects of the use of the Quality Code relevant to the management of the quality of learning opportunities

are considered in paragraph 2.2. It is **advisable** for the College to use the Quality Code to develop effective policies and procedures to support the delivery of the provision.

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

1.4 There have been improvements to the documents and procedures used for internal verification. For ATHE, internally marked student work is scrutinised by external verifiers after tutors have followed the detailed procedures for assessor standardisation, internal verification and re-verification. Samples of marked student work show that the College procedures provide a suitable basis for internal verification. Records are maintained using internal verification of assessment decision forms. IAM moderates a sample of marked student coursework which it does not require to be internally verified. Although the College is expected to apply deadlines for submission of coursework as defined by the awarding organisations, these have not always been applied consistently, resulting in delays to the internal and external verification processes. As a consequence, the finalisation of student grades has taken longer than planned.

1.5 External verifiers continue to identify concerns although the College has responded to their comments. The ATHE External Verification Report (June 2013) raised some assessment issues which have been addressed, for example, formative assessments are now recorded in learners' files. However, the latest report in October 2013 notes that learners' work does not always meet the learning outcomes for the assessment criteria at the required level, and that a few assessment judgements 'are not secure'. The College has agreed to follow the action plan following the external verification process. The IAM Systems Activity Report (February 2013) includes the need for learner assessment plans and reviews of progress to be implemented. These requirements have been completed.

1.6 ATHE and IAM external verifiers have raised concerns that sometimes there is a lack of effective referencing and about plagiarism. There is a detailed guide to Harvard referencing to avoid plagiarism in the Student Handbook, which students confirmed is helpful. However, the ATHE external verifier reported poor Harvard referencing skills and recommended strengthening the system for detecting plagiarism. IAM identified plagiarised work which had not been detected internally. It is **advisable** for the College to improve the mechanisms for safeguarding academic standards.

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

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The lack of strategic oversight restricts the College's ability to fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. The College is responsible for all aspects of its provision with respect to the quality of learning opportunities and manages these through its Quality Assurance Committee. Minutes demonstrate a focus on operational management rather than on strategic planning. Therefore, the meetings do not provide effective strategic management of learning opportunities. The annual review process provides little evaluation of the quality of learning opportunities. While the operational management of the College addresses some issues relating to learning opportunities, for example the tracking of progression of individual

students, the College does not plan, monitor, review or evaluate its management of the quality of learning opportunities effectively. The College has not responded effectively to many of the recommendations identified in the 2012 review report. It is **essential** for the College to improve the effectiveness of its strategic oversight of its higher education provision.

How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?

2.2 The College has not made significant progress in its use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities. The action plan in the 2012 review report advised the College to review its policies in line with the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*, now the Quality Code). At the time of the last review, the admissions policy and the policy on disability had been aligned with the *Code of practice*, but since then the College has not explicitly mapped its other policies and procedures against the Quality Code. Consequently policies, for example on teaching and learning, staff development or assessment, lack rigour, which the policy review intended to address. Because the existing annual monitoring process is not thorough or evaluative there is no clear sense that the College considers the effectiveness of the way it engages with the wider higher education community through external reference points. The recommendation in paragraph 1.3 also applies to the quality of learning opportunities.

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

2.3 The College's oversight of the quality of teaching and learning is operational rather than strategic. The Principal oversees teaching and learning through monthly meetings of the Academic Division. The Quality Assurance Committee does not formally receive a report from these meetings, but does discuss assessment, staff and student feedback. Schemes of work for each module are reviewed, but the outcomes of these reviews are not formally recorded. The College has not evaluated the impact on learning by the significant increase in student numbers and does not evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning as part of an annual quality cycle. The College does not formally assess its management of the quality of teaching and learning.

2.4 The College does not have a teaching and learning strategy. The College's Guidance on Teaching and Learning does not focus on aspects specific to higher education, such as the development of analytical skills and critical evaluation. Schemes of work indicate that staff have not implemented an articulated strategy of teaching and learning, although students welcome the variety of teaching. Tutors state the quarterly observations of teaching and learning provide opportunities to share ideas, but the observation form does not focus on higher education. For example, it does not consider students' use of referencing or promoting independent learning. The College has revised its assessment feedback paperwork, but the feedback itself remains inconsistent in quality. It has not addressed the advisable recommendation from the previous review to improve the quality of feedback given to students on their written work. It is **advisable** for the College to improve the effectiveness of its oversight of teaching and learning.

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

2.5 The College's Quality Assurance Committee has clear oversight of student support issues and manages these effectively. Student support is a standing agenda item for the Committee and, in response to the previous review, the College records all support issues in student progress folders. It has yet to find a way of summarising these folders to inform the

future management of support. Students are positive about the pastoral support they receive such as help to find accommodation or doctors. The Pre-Arrival Information Booklet and Student Handbook are instructive, students are informed about complaints, appeals and mitigating circumstances policies, but must request copies rather than them being readily available. The College has established a personal tutor system which provides students with support on the development of their academic skills. However, students often prefer to receive guidance from subject tutors rather than personal ones. When students make contact with any tutor, the tutor records the issues raised in a form which goes into the student's personal file.

How effectively does the College develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?

2.6 The College does not operate an effective staff development policy. At the previous review, the College was advised to improve its staff appraisal system and the effectiveness of its teaching observations scheme. The Quality Assurance Committee receives information about teaching observations and the revised observation form encourages staff to reflect on previous comments. However, there have been no staff appraisals since the last review. Consequently, the observations have not yet informed the College's planning of staff development for either individuals or the institution as a whole. All the teaching staff, except one, have a higher degree, but only two have a postgraduate teaching qualification. The concern about assessment feedback (see paragraph 2.4) indicates that the College has not identified which members of staff require development to improve the quality of feedback. It is **advisable** for the College to implement an effective staff development policy.

2.7 The College sees most aspects of staff development as the responsibility of the individual member of staff. It does not support developmental activities financially, but it does aim to accommodate them within the timetable and it delivers some in-house training for key issues affecting all the staff. Staff receive an induction on appointment.

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

2.8 The College's process for ensuring that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes is inconsistent and reactive rather than proactive. Student representatives and staff can raise resource requests and there is an anonymous suggestion box. The Head of Centre collates all suggestions and takes higher-cost items to the Quality Assurance Committee for approval. This process works in some areas. Teaching and information technology resources are sufficient for students to attain the intended learning outcomes. However, the Quality Assurance Committee indicated in January 2013 that there was a need to purchase plagiarism-detection software by August 2013, but this was only finalised during the review visit. The lack of this software has made the plagiarism concerns described in paragraph 1.6 more difficult for the College to resolve. It is **advisable** for the College to improve the mechanisms for allocating resources.

The review team has **no confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Information about learning opportunities

How effectively does the College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The College uses a range of methods to provide information to students and other stakeholders. These include a website, student handbooks and marketing materials. Student handbooks at programme and College levels contain relevant and helpful information and are fit for purpose. Of the programme handbooks, only those for ATHE are produced within the College. The website provides an overview of the College; the programmes it offers, its facilities for students, as well some pastoral information. The College's prospectus is only available through the website. Students reported that they had found the website helpful when carrying out searches for information prior to applying to the College. The College produces individual programme leaflets and has made limited use of newspaper advertisements.

3.2 The virtual learning environment (VLE) is helpful to students although it is in the early stages of development. It contains comprehensive programme and module delivery data, including programme handbooks, copies of presentations and some e-texts. The email facility is effectively used by staff. Students value the VLE, which they can access both at home and at the College. However, there are underused sites on the VLE: for example, some of the assignments, assessment and results pages. The VLE has no blog or discussion facilities. It does not provide access to the college-level student handbook and relevant student-related policies and guides, such as the College guidance on plagiarism or its policies on academic malpractice and academic appeals. It would be **desirable** for the College to continue to develop the virtual learning environment.

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

3.3 The College has not effectively responded to the action from the previous review concerning the maintenance of the currency of all information on its website. Some information on the website is accurate and helpful; for example, general information about the nature of the College. However, the Quality Assurance Committee, which has overall responsibility for overseeing information, has not monitored the currency and accuracy of all of the information on the website. There is no formal cycle of audits for maintenance and updating. This has resulted in poor management of the website content. The College acknowledged that an external provider had operational control of the website. Therefore the College was unable to manage the existing information on the website or to upload new information. The website contains obsolete information relating to a now closed Regional Admissions Office. Other pages concerning health and safety regulations, location maps, and academic support indicate that the content is under development and not presently available. At the time of the review it was not possible to download the College's prospectus or the college-level student handbook.

3.4 The College has made very little progress since the October 2012 review visit in improving the information it provides through its policies and procedures. Some aspects of this are described in paragraphs 1.1, 1.2, and 2.2. Policies and procedures that support the College's management of academic standards and quality assurance contain inconsistent use of language, lack contextualisation to the College and are not always current. For example, the Guidance on Teaching and Learning refers to 'pupils' and 'teachers'; other documents refer to 'students' and 'lecturers'. It does not provide any guidance on skills and knowledge development relevant to study at level 4 and above. The Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy does not provide the opportunity to comment on whether students are demonstrating the expected knowledge and skills for their level of higher

education study. The Policy for Setting Marking and Verifying Assessments 2013 refers to the superseded A1 and V1 awards instead of the Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance suite of awards. It is **essential** for the College to implement an effective mechanism for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

The team concludes that reliance **cannot** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Action plan³

College of Advanced Studies Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight October 2013						
Essential	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is essential for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure it has effective processes for the approval and introduction of new programmes (paragraph 1.2) 	Produce a guidance on the approval and introduction of new programmes in line with <i>Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval</i> of the Quality Code, including procedure of approval Review responsibilities of Head of Academics to explicitly include programme approval	04-02-2014	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	All programmes are officially approved and prepared prior to course start Tutors feel prepared to deliver course	Principal	External verifier report Tutor feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the effectiveness of its strategic oversight of the higher education provision (paragraph 2.1) 	Hold a Quality Assurance Committee strategic meeting to specifically plan the quality of learning opportunities for 2014	13-01-2014	Principal	Quality Assurance Committee addresses strategic issues affecting the quality of academic	Quality Assurance Committee	Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes

³ The College 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 College's awarding organisations.

	<p>Review College's current strategic and business plans with well-defined, SMARTer targets and explicit key performance indicators</p> <p>Create and maintain a matrix which lists the previous and upcoming review dates of each key College policy</p>		Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	standards	Principal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement an effective mechanism for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy (paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4). 	<p>Explicitly redistribute responsibilities of former Head of Centre to other members of staff</p> <p>Check all current website pages; update incorrect or outdated information; and upload current versions of prospectus, course handbooks and other key documents</p> <p>Gain operational control of website</p>	13-01-2014	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Website is relevant and up to date</p> <p>Students have access to all relevant information</p> <p>Student work produced is generally suitable for course level</p>	Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Assessment results</p> <p>Student feedback forms</p>

	<p>from external provider</p> <p>Implement a formal cycle of audit for maintenance of website</p> <p>Upload all relevant documents on student portal (including level descriptors)</p> <p>Create a College glossary to define terms used in College policies and maintain consistent use of language</p>	04-02-2014				
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to develop effective policies and procedures to support the delivery of the provision (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.2) 	<p>Schedule spring 2014 team meetings for detailed review of key policies only</p> <p>Make annual monitoring process more rigorous and evaluative</p> <p>Map all policies against UK Quality</p>	<p>Schedule made by 13-01-2014, series completed by 22-03-2014</p>	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Portfolio of College guidance further incorporates the Quality Code</p> <p>All Academic Committee minutes show that all action points are reported and tracked until</p>	Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Annual monitoring reports</p> <p>Portfolio of policies</p>

	Code (for example, programme review process must be in line with <i>Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review</i>).			completed and closed		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the mechanisms for safeguarding academic standards (paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6) 	Review student assessment policy, particularly late submission and resubmission of coursework	13-01-2014	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee	Plagiarism-detection software effectively used to identify and reduce instances of plagiarism	Quality Assurance Committee	Assessment results External verification reports
	Hold plagiarism workshop for students (sources of information, editing and referencing)	04-02-2014	Principal	Internal verification process evidences instances of, and responses to, plagiarism in student work		
	Make use of plagiarism-detection software mandatory for ATHE students	13-01-2014		Successful implementation of anti-plagiarism training for all staff		
	All staff to undertake training on the software.	13-01-2014				
	Update internal verification form to include section on plagiarism so that plagiarism-detection software can be used	13-01-2014				

	and outcome recorded for each assessment verified					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the effectiveness of its oversight of teaching and learning (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4) 	<p>Implement a mandatory system of written reports from Academic Division meetings to Quality Assurance Committee meetings</p> <p>Record reviews of schemes of work</p> <p>Hold academic staff appraisals</p> <p>Develop a teaching and learning strategy which focuses on higher education (for example, development of analytical skills and critical evaluation)</p> <p>Update Observation of Teaching and Learning Form to focus on higher education (for example, student referencing, independent learning)</p>	<p>13-01-2014</p> <p>04-02-2014</p>	Principal	<p>Quality of teaching improves</p> <p>Quality of student work improves</p> <p>Quality of marking improves</p>	Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Meeting minutes</p> <p>Assessment results</p> <p>Observation of Teaching and Learning Form</p> <p>Assessment schedule</p> <p>Staff appraisals</p>

	Reshape structure of assessment schedule to allow more time for improved coursework marking	13-01-2014	Vice Chair of Quality Assurance Committee			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement an effective staff development policy (paragraph 2.6) 	<p>Rewrite staff development policy</p> <p>Allocate more funds for staff development</p> <p>Identify additional staff training gaps and assess needs</p> <p>Arrange both internal and external feedback training for all members of academic staff</p> <p>Hold academic staff appraisals</p>	<p>04-02-2014</p> <p>Complete by 30-05-2014</p> <p>04-02-2014</p>	Principal	<p>Staff development policy in place</p> <p>Quality of assessment improves</p>	Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Staff appraisals</p> <p>Staff training certificates</p> <p>External verifier report from awarding organisation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve its mechanisms for allocating resources (paragraph 2.8). 	<p>Develop a proactive policy on the mechanism for allocating resources</p> <p>Delegate former Head of Centre's facilities and resources responsibilities to other members of staff</p>	31-01-2014	Principal	Resource needs are identified before they need to be requested by students	Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Resource reports and checklists</p> <p>Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes</p>

	Allocate more funds for learning resources					
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop the virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.2). 	<p>Upload current versions of prospectus, course handbooks and other student-related documents to student portal</p> <p>Contact the College's external providers of support for the portal to discuss software amendments to student portal</p>	31-01-2014	Acting Head of Centre	Student portal is accessible and up to date with all required documents	Quality Assurance Committee	<p>Student feedback</p> <p>Meeting minutes</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.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight.

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 quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree-awarding powers, research degree-awarding powers or university title).

awarding organisation An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

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

good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

highly trusted sponsor An organisation that the UK Government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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 study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

learning outcomes 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 reviews and reports.

programme (of study) An approved course of study that 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 (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation 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').

quality See **academic quality**.

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

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.

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 standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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