Magna Carta College Ltd

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

October 2013

Key findings about Magna Carta College Ltd

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 **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives (ABE) and the University of Wales (the 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 this awarding body and organisation.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The team has identified no features of **good practice**.

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:

- put into operation an appropriate formal committee structure for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4)
- establish an effective quality assurance cycle which includes a realistic timetable for reviewing and implementing a consolidated action plan (paragraph 1.5)
- develop a strategy for assuring the quality of feedback to learners (paragraph 2.10)
- implement its staff development plan (paragraph 2.12)
- review its teaching and learning strategy to ensure that it informs College practice and provides a framework for planning, monitoring and evaluating the development of staff involved in teaching and assessment (paragraph 2.13)
- complete the review of the accuracy and completeness of all the information it provides and implement version control (paragraphs 3.5 and 3.7).

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

- complete the mapping of its policies against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and provide appropriate staff support to use it effectively (paragraphs 1.7 and 2.3)
- implement an improved system for the verification of assessment (paragraph 1.8)
- use the outcomes of peer observation and the observation of teaching and learning to disseminate good practice (paragraph 2.5)
- implement a formal induction programme for staff (paragraph 2.14)
- make effective use of the virtual learning environment for all students (paragraph 2.17).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](1) at Magna Carta College 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 provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives (ABE) and the University of Wales (the University). The review was carried out by Ms Brenda Eade, Mr David Malachi, Dr Mark Rawlinson (reviewers) and Mr Robert Jones (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *[Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](2).*[2] Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider, meetings with staff and with students, and reports of reviews by QAA.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- subject benchmark statements
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- regulations of the University
- regulations of the ABE.

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 an independent international business college, aiming to provide a high quality education to all, including those previously excluded from educational opportunities owing to financial constraints. Its mission is to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate education that is excellent in knowledge and skills and enhances the student experience. Its students are drawn from all over the world.

The College occupies a site in the Summertown area of Oxford. It was founded in 2006 and recruited its first students in 2009. In July 2012, it was acquired by Oxford Education Online Ltd and a new Chief Executive and management team were appointed. It currently employs eight part-time academic staff, representing approximately two full-time equivalent staff, and 13 full-time administrative staff. The total number of students on all courses at the College is currently 62. However, in its strategic plan, the College is planning for a rapid increase in the number of its staff and students.

After the review visit in February 2012, the College achieved **confidence** judgements relating to the management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. In addition, **reliance** was placed on the accuracy and completeness of information that the College published about itself. However, following the March 2013 annual monitoring visit, the team concluded that, while the College was making progress in implementing the action plan from the February 2012 review, further improvement was required. This resulted in the present review.

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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

Association of Business Executives (ABE)

- Level 4 Diploma in Business Management (0)
- Level 5 Diploma in Business Management (4)
- Level 6 Diploma in Business Management (0)
- Level 6 Extended Diploma in Business Management (1)
- Level 7 Diploma (0)*
- Level 7 Extended Diploma (2)*

*Offered through the ABE.

University of Wales (the University)

- BA Business Studies (top-up) (7)**
- MBA Healthcare Management (8)**
- MBA International Management (39)**
- MBA Business Law (1)**

**Students have completed all coursework and are at the dissertation stage of their programme.

The provider's stated responsibilities

Responsibility for academic standards is retained by the University and the ABE, subject to the College's participation in the assessment processes of the University. The College retains responsibility for the quality of the delivery of the higher education it provides. Responsibility for information about learning opportunities is shared.

Recent developments

Following the termination of its agreement with the University, the College is in teach-out mode for the students currently registered with it. The College is in negotiation with several other UK universities to form a new partnership to be able to offer degree programmes from early in 2014. In line with these developments, the College expects to open a postgraduate centre in central London early in 2014. In addition, the College offers executive banking courses, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants tutorial classes and an online programme that will soon offer Association of Business Practitioners courses to around 800 students. From early in 2014, a wider range of professional courses, especially in finance and accounting, will be available.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. However, the College resubmitted the same submission that was used for the review of February 2012. Representative students met the review coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the review team during the review visit.

Detailed findings about Magna Carta College Ltd

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The College is effectively managing academic standards for the programmes validated by the University, which, until June 2013, was the main awarding body for the College. These programmes are now at the teach-out stage, but minutes of the External Examination Boards and the Joint Board of Studies indicate that standards are continuing to be maintained. The Academic Dean of the University and a student representative confirmed that this stage of delivery was being managed effectively. Previous reports from the University's moderator and external examiners are favourable and indicate that standards have been maintained throughout the delivery of these programmes.

1.2   The College has recently become an accredited centre for the ABE and has been successfully delivering one of its business programmes to a small group of students, recruited in February 2013. As these programmes have been running for only one semester, the College has not yet been able to analyse student performance.

1.3   The current structure for managing standards within the College is effective for the small number of students on the programmes, but it is not appropriate for the future planned expansion of the College outlined in its strategic plan. The Cabinet/Senior Management Team is responsible for strategic decisions and has met regularly since January 2013. The Academic Team, which comprises administrative staff only, is responsible for operational matters and has met weekly since August 2013. Teaching staff and students are not represented on these committees. Issues raised by staff and students are dealt with informally by the Academic Manager, who currently manages both staff and students. Although this provides a short line of communication, it does not produce an audit trail of action taken in response to issues raised, and it is not sustainable for the planned growth of the College, when a more formal structure will be required.

1.4   The College has reviewed its committee and management structures in response to the outcomes in the March 2013 annual monitoring review report and in preparation for its planned expansion. However, the proposed structure is unrealistic. Terms of reference for five committees have been drafted, but these do not support the operation of the College. They do not correspond to the committee and management structures set out in the College's self-evaluation, and they do not align to its Quality Handbook. A diagram of the committee structure, made available during the review is over complex and does not include all the proposed committees. It is **advisable** for the College to put into operation an appropriate formal committee structure for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

1.5   The College has produced a consolidated action plan which includes actions in the 2012 review report, the 2013 annual monitoring review report and its own review. However, the timescale for completion of many of the actions is in 2014 and beyond, with little indication of how more immediate action will be taken to ensure that standards are managed effectively. The committees responsible for implementing these actions are not fully operational, and the College has yet to establish an effective quality cycle for monitoring and evaluating the action being taken. It is **advisable** for the College to establish an effective quality assurance cycle which includes a realistic timetable for reviewing and implementing a consolidated action plan.

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

1.6 The College has effectively used its awarding body, the University, as its main external reference point (see also paragraph 1.1). It is now an accredited centre for ABE, but as students have yet to complete the assessment for programmes offered through this awarding body, it is not possible to evaluate how effectively this external reference point is being used**.** The College is currently in negotiation with several universities regarding the provision of first degree top-up and postgraduate programmes. It intends to use the reference points of these organisations to inform the future management of academic standards. The College has secured membership of the European Foundation for Management Development, under the sponsorship of two other university business schools. It intends to use this organisation as a further external reference point for evaluating the management of standards.

1.7 Engagement with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) is in the early stages of development and the policies and procedures of the College have not yet been mapped against it. Some reference is made to the Quality Code in the strategic plan and the Compliance Officer has attended a QAA workshop relating to it. However, teaching staff are not fully aware of the content of the Quality Code and have not been given guidance on how to use the indicators to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. It is **desirable** for the College to complete the mapping of its policies against the Quality Code, and provide appropriate staff support to use it effectively.

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

1.8 Verification of assessments by the College prior to distribution to students is variable and marking schemes are not always provided. The College has plans to set up an Internal Verification Committee/Teaching and Assessment Panel to scrutinise assessments, but these committees/panels have not yet been established. This may also provide an opportunity for staff to share good practice but the terms of reference have not yet been finalised. It is **desirable** for the College to implement an improved system for the verification of assessment.

1.9 The College has effectively summarised the reports from external examiners for April 2011 to June 2013 and devised a set of actions to be taken in response to issues raised by the examiners. Although the external examiners' reports are available to staff and students on the virtual learning environment, the summary of actions to be taken has not yet been uploaded. The College intends to use the Quality and Standards Committee to monitor and evaluate these actions, but the Committee has not yet met (see recommendation in paragraph 1.5).

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

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2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 As with academic standards, the framework for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities has not yet been fully established (see paragraphs 1.3 to 1.5).

However, staff are aware of the management structures and procedures, and engage effectively with the current transitional phase.

2.2   In view of the current size of the student population at the College, the small scale, and often informal nature, of student engagement works well at present. Students have an informal but effective role in decision making, as noted in paragraph 2.6. However, they are not yet represented on the College committees, nor do they have formal access to the minutes of meetings. The College plans that this will happen.

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

2.3   The College does not make sufficient use of external reference points in its management and enhancement of learning opportunities. Mention is made of external reference points in the College comprehensive strategic plan, but not elsewhere. Much of the activity to support alignment reflects ambitious medium and long-term planning, but does not inform current practice. As with academic standards, the College continues to rely on its awarding body to ensure that programmes meet the expectations of external reference points associated with the quality of learning opportunities. The recommendation in paragraph 1.7 also applies here.

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

2.4   Teaching staff commented enthusiastically about the range of teaching methods that they use. They gave tangible examples of how such methodology provides opportunities to support the development and achievement of students.

2.5   There is a system of peer observation, but its confidential nature provides little opportunity for sharing good practice among teaching staff or informing staff development. The College also has a procedure for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations conducted by the Dean. At the time of the review, no observations of teaching and learning had taken place. It is **desirable** for the College to use the outcomes of peer observation and the observation of teaching and learning to disseminate good practice.

2.6   The BA and MBA programmes have student representatives who have expressed student views at informal, but effective, meetings with staff. This has resulted in improvements in teaching practice. This system of representatives has not yet been extended to the recently introduced ABE programmes. However, students on those programmes claimed that they were happy with the responses of staff to any points they raised. Students have opportunities to comment on the quality of teaching in end-of-module surveys, an end-of-year survey and in online questionnaires. The College demonstrates a commitment to developing formal approaches to student representation.

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

2.7   New students experience a useful induction programme, which includes an introduction to the virtual learning environment (VLE), study skills, plagiarism, pastoral support, and academic and administrative procedures. The planned review and evaluation of the induction process has not taken place and the College has identified this as an area for development.

2.8   The College provides effective support mechanisms for students. Because of the small scale of operations, this is currently informal and highly responsive. It is not sustainable for the planned growth of the College. The College does not yet operate a

formal personal tutor system, and academic and pastoral issues are dealt with by the Academic Manager.

2.9   Plagiarism-detection software is used to provide formative feedback to assist students in avoiding plagiarism, and is integrated into the VLE for online submissions. A review of students' summative work confirmed that this facility is used to screen all work for plagiarism.

2.10   Teaching staff provide feedback on student work in written, oral and online form. However, it is often cursory and fails to provide students with effective feedback on their performance and how to improve their performance. It is **advisable** for the College to develop a strategy for assuring the quality of feedback to learners.

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

2.11   The College does not have effective means for managing staff development. Senior staff hold positions as external examiners with external institutions that give them valuable experience and strengthen their knowledge of external reference points. However, staff development organised by the College is currently very limited, is not monitored and is mainly concentrated on administrative staff. For example, when the Compliance Officer attended a QAA workshop on the Quality Code, the feedback he gave was confined to administrative staff. No members of the teaching staff were involved.

2.12   The College's future staff development policy comprises a staff development plan in its strategic plan. The plan is linked to the development of proposed new programmes, and is timetabled in the consolidated action plan. The College does not benchmark its staff development plan against the Higher Education Academy Professional Standards Framework for teachers in Higher Education. It is **advisable** for the College to implement its staff development plan.

2.13   The learning and teaching strategy, and the guide to peer observation of learning and teaching do not provide any evidence of consultation with teaching staff or deliberation on the educational goals of the College. Staff development at the College should be supported by a learning and teaching strategy that is informed by wide consultation with, and input from, teaching staff. Teaching staff participate in peer observation (see paragraph 2.5), but a sample peer observation report did not show how staff development needs could be identified (see also paragraph 2.5). It is **advisable** for the College to review its teaching and learning strategy to ensure that it informs College practice and provides a framework for planning, monitoring and evaluating the development of staff involved in teaching and assessment.

2.14   The College does not have a formal induction policy for staff. New teaching staff are inducted by the Academic Manager, but this provision does not currently cover induction on college policies. The team endorses the College's intention to introduce formal procedures for probation and for appraisal. It is **desirable** for the College to implement a formal induction programme for staff.

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

2.15   Academic resource planning is monitored by the Cabinet/Senior Management Team. While the College library has limited but adequate book stock, with core and supporting textbooks, students also have access to the College's online library.

Students previously had access to considerable learning materials through the University and, on payment of a fee, the Oxford Union Library. The College envisages a similar arrangement with a future university partner.

2.16   The College makes satisfactory provision for information technology for the current number of students. There is computer and data projection in all teaching areas and a computer to student ratio of 1:10. The College has identified the need to improve the speed and efficiency of internet connectivity.

2.17   Access to the VLE is welcomed by outgoing BA and MBA students as a valuable resource. The ABE programmes are not yet fully supported by the VLE. The College has identified this as an area for development. It is **desirable** for the College to make effective use of the VLE for all students.

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.

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3   Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1   The College makes information accessible to its intended audiences, including potential and current students, staff, employers and other stakeholders, by a range of media. It publishes a downloadable prospectus, and a website which has been recently, and effectively, enhanced. It uses the VLE to provide copies of some of its policy documents to students and staff. Information which the College provides includes promotional material, a Student Handbook, a Quality Handbook, an Assessment Handbook (last revised for 2011-12) and a Dissertation Handbook. A Tutor Handbook is being revised, and is not currently issued to staff.

3.2   The VLE is the primary vehicle for the delivery of information about learning opportunities and assessment to the BA and MBA students, who rated it as very good. ABE students reported that they use the ABE website for information about their studies, and felt the VLE was not relevant to them. Announcements to students on the VLE are also disseminated by email to ensure they are received by all students.

3.3   The College relies on face-to-face meetings to ensure that students and staff are familiar with current policies and expectations during the ongoing process of revising the management framework and processes. With current numbers this is effective, but it would not be sustainable with larger student and staff cohorts.

How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.4   The Dean has final responsibility for the approval of all information published by the College. An administrative officer is currently responsible for the management of the material uploaded to the VLE. The College is aware that it has to address the question of its version control system and has begun work on a solution, but this has not yet been fully implemented.

3.5   Access to the VLE is not completely reliable; the Student Handbook is not currently available; and the chapters of the Quality Code have been uploaded to the staff section of the VLE, but are also unavailable.

3.6   The College has initiated an online survey of the VLE, but it is too soon to test the effectiveness of this evaluative instrument, or the College's intention that the Academic Team Meeting use data to enhance the provision of information by means of the VLE. The College does not have a formal arena in which to reflect on and plan enhancements to the use of the VLE as a resource for learning and teaching.

3.7   There are some inaccuracies and inconsistencies in information about learning opportunities. Progression routes illustrated in the hardcopy prospectus are no longer current. Hardcopy advertising material does not reflect the fact that current provision is accredited by the College's awarding organisation. A graduate diploma programme is advertised on the website and other promotional materials. This is misleading since it does not identify the graduate diploma programme as a non-accredited programme. The website and prospectus includes photographs of the facilities of another institution, to which students of the College do not have access. A student presented as offering a testimonial about the College is stated to hold a degree, the correct title of which is not given (a fact that was pointed out to the College in February 2012). The 2012 review report recommended that it was advisable for the College to complete its planned review of the prospectus and the website before promotional literature was distributed for the subsequent academic year, 2012-13. The College has engaged in the review but it has not yet been completed.
It is **advisable** for the College to complete the review of the accuracy and completeness of all the information it provides and implement version control.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Action plan[3]

Magna Carta College Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of October 2013						
Advisable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date(s)**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• put into operation an appropriate formal committee structure for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4)	The implementation of a fully operational committee structure covering Academic Board, Programme Development Committee and Student Committee that is fit for the purpose	a) Launching the academic committees with formally minuted meetings; named actions and targets drawing on formal terms of reference and ensuring appropriate student and external representation on the Academic Board	June 2014	Dean, Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Board of Directors Appropriate accrediting institution Advisory Board	Completed actions evidenced in Annual Monitoring process Staff and student satisfaction data collection Positive external feedback
		b) The production of an annual academic timetable with agreed dates for all committees to meet	January 2014	Academic Department Manager	Senior Management Team Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Academic timetable signed off by Academic Board

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[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 body and organisation.

• establish an effective quality assurance cycle which includes a realistic timetable for reviewing and implementing a consolidated action plan (paragraph 1.5)	The establishment of an effective quality assurance and enhancement cycle including a realistic timetable for reviewing and implementing a consolidated action plan	a) Appointment of Director for Quality and Academic Compliance	January 2014	Dean	Senior Management Team	Clear recruitment specifications signed off by Academic Board
		b) Produce a realistic timetable for reviewing and implementing the consolidated action plan	February 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team	Signed off by Academic Board
		c) Review the timetabled actions	September 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	All academic committees	Signed off by Academic Board assuring all actions completed
• develop a strategy for assuring the quality of feedback to learners (paragraph 2.10)	The implementation of a strategy assuring quality of feedback to the learners	a) The introduction of a cross-college assessment feedback sheet	January 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	All Academic committees Senior Management Team Course teams	Suggested actions from the respective committees fed back to the Director of Quality for amendments
		b) Two-day staff development workshop on the provision of critical and constructive feedback to students	February 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team	Signed off by Academic Board

		c) An internal moderation process, sampling feedback sheets from each course	June 2014	Director of Quality and Compliance	Academic Board	Embedded system of feedback
					Course teams	Improved student performance
					Student Committee	Increased student satisfaction
• implement its staff development plan (paragraph 2.12)	The implementation of the College Staff Development Plan	The production of an annual timetable of staff development activities benchmarked to the Higher Education Academy Professional Standards Framework for teachers in Higher Education	February 2014	Dean	Senior Management Team	Signed off by Academic Board
		Review the progress of the staff development plan on a termly basis	June 2014	Dean	Senior Management Team	Improved performance at staff appraisal
					Academic Board	Continuous monitoring evaluation and review of the Staff Development Plan

• review its teaching and learning strategy to ensure that it informs College practice and provides a framework for planning, monitoring and evaluating the development of staff involved in teaching and assessment (paragraph 2.3)	The implementation of a revised learning and teaching strategy to inform College practice	a) The review and dissemination of the learning and teaching strategy	June 2014	Dean	Senior Management Team All committees	CEO and Senior Management Team Critical feedback from all committees with appropriate actions
		b) A thorough review of all learning materials in consultation with academic staff to ensure the materials are fit for the purpose and up to date	November 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	All committees and disseminated at the Staff Forum Senior Management Team	The incorporation of cross-college feedback into revised learning materials where appropriate
		c) The appointment of a Dean of Learning and Teaching	December 2014	Dean	Senior Management Team	Appropriate selection and recruitment procedures undertaken

	The provision of a framework via staff development and appraisal for monitoring and evaluating the development of staff involved in teaching and assessment	a) Provide a two-day training programme for teaching staff to familiarise and engage with the Quality Code as a means to inform their teaching	January 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team	Presenting the programme framework to the Academic Board for feedback and approval
		b) Introduce a component in the annual appraisal for staff to monitor teaching staff progress in their understanding and application of the Quality Code to enhance their teaching	May 2014	Dean Programme managers	Programme Committee	Minutes and actions received and reviewed by Academic Board
		c) Collect information from teaching staff how they are developing their knowledge and involvement with external reference points, for example, through external examinerships; conferences; curriculum development and research	May 2014	Dean Programme managers	Programme Committee	Minutes and actions received and reviewed by Academic Board

• complete the review of the accuracy and completeness of all the information it provides and implement version control (paragraphs 3.5 and 3.7)	Complete the ongoing review of all information offered at the College to ensure accuracy and readiness for final publication and that it is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy	a) Produce the Student Handbook	January 2014	Dean	All committees for review	Feedback from committees
		b) A thorough review and revision of the website, programmes offered, prospectus and module handbooks to bring them up to date and ensure their accuracy of information	June 2014	Dean	Iteration of information about learning opportunities through all committees	Critical feedback from committees Feedback from student feedback system
	Implement a version control system	Production of procedures for reviewing information about learning opportunities and version controlled documentation and paperwork that clearly specifies final sign-off by the Dean	January 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team	Academic Board sign-off with recommended further actions
Desirable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date/s**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• complete the mapping of its policies against the Quality Code, and	A full map of the College policies against the Quality Code	a) The immediate selection of relevant staff to complete respective sections of the Quality Code mapping exercise	March 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Dean	A list of staff with target dates to complete actions

provide appropriate staff support to use it effectively (paragraphs 1.7 and 2.3)		b) Continuous review on a fortnightly basis of progress of mapping the Quality Code to policies until completion of the map	September 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Dean Senior Management Team	Academic Board with progress and actions at each meeting of the Board fed back for further amendment and development of the College Quality Code Map
		c) Training of all relevant staff in the effective use of mapping	June 2014	Dean, Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team	Academic Board
• implement an improved system for the verification of assessment (paragraph 1.8)	The implementation of an improved formal system of internal and external verification as a major component of the the College Quality Assurance and Enhancement model	a) The introduction of an improved Internal Teaching and Assessment Panel to oversee all assessment processes	January 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	External Verification Committee	Academic Board receipt of minutes and outcomes which are critically reviewed with actions and returned to relevant stakeholders for implementation
		b) The formal inception of an External Verification Committee	June 2014	Programme managers	Academic Board	
		c) The production of transparent evidence of institutional approval of all assignments being	July 2014	Dean	Academic Board	Formal tabled minutes

		appropriately assessed and standardised, fit for the purpose and level before offered to students on individual programmes				
		d) Institutional verification, approval and standardisation of cohort assessment outcomes following moderation and where appropriate second marking reported to Academic Board	September 2014	Dean	Academic Board	Formal tabled report and minutes
		e) The delivery of an assessment moderation and second marking policy disseminated through the committee system for approval	June 2014	Director of Quality	Dean	Procedures reviewed and signed off by the Academic Board
• use the outcomes of peer observation and the observation of teaching and learning to disseminate good practice (paragraph 2.5)	Use the outcomes of peer observation and the observation of teaching and learning to disseminate to good practice	a) Analyse and interpret outcomes of peer review and observation	March 2014	Dean, Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team Academic Board	A formal report to the Academic Board identifying constructs to aid improved staff performance and evidence of increasing student satisfaction rates

		b) The production of an annual timetable of peer review/teaching observation overseen by the Dean and programme managers	January 2014	Programme managers	Senior Management Team Academic Staff	Annual timetable signed off by the Senior Management Team
		c) The discussion of evidence of peer review and observation through the staff appraisal and feedback system	May 2014	Academic managers with authority to appraise	Senior Management Team	Report to Senior Management Team on appraisal outcomes
		d) A continued cycle for the collection of data for teaching observation by Dean via programme managers	December 2014	Academic managers with authority to observe	Senior Management Group	Annual Report to the Academic Board
• implement a formal induction programme for staff (paragraph 2.14)	The implementation of a formal staff induction system	a) The production of a staff induction programme	January 2014	Dean and COO	Academic Board Senior Management Team	Confirmed by Academic Board following oral report from COO
		b) The production and completion of staff critical feedback sheets at induction for enhancement purposes	February 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance COO	Dean	Report of outcomes to the Academic Board

• make effective use of the virtual learning environment for all students (paragraph 2.17)	Use the virtual learning environment effectively for all students	a) Introduce the virtual learning environment across all programmes of study	January 2014	Dean, Information Technology/ Virtual Learning Environment Manager	Senior Management Team	Signed off by Senior Management Team with any amendments
		b) Survey new students on virtual learning environment workability during induction	January and October 2014	Programme Manager Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team	Analyse data and act on outcomes
		c) Survey staff/students at the end of the semester on the effectiveness of the virtual learning environment as part of feedback systems	April and November 2014	Programme managers Programme Manager Information Technology/ Virtual Learning Environment Manager	Senior Management Team, Staff Forum, Student Committee	Analysis signed off by Senior Management Team with proposed actions
		d) Undertake ongoing Quality Review of the virtual learning environment system on a termly basis	May and December 2014	Director of Quality and Academic Compliance	Senior Management Team, Academic Board and	Termly report on stakeholder feedback to Academic Board with agreed

					Student Committee	actions forwarded to Senior Management Team
		e) Monitor the usage of the virtual learning environment by each student	Monthly until December 2014	Information Technology/ Virtual Learning Environment Manager	Programme managers	Data collected and fed back via individual tutorials and to Programme Committee

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

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[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.