



# Higher Education Review of the University of Bradford

April 2014

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Bradford. The review took place from 28 April to 2 May 2014 and was conducted by a team of six reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Mark Atlay
- Miss Elizabeth Dobson-McKittrick
- Professor Geoffrey Elliott
- Dr Sylvia Hargreaves
- Professor Andrew McRae
- Dr Ann Read.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by the University of Bradford and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (Quality Code)<sup>1</sup> setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of threshold academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 8.

In reviewing the University of Bradford the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The [themes](#) for the academic year 2013-14 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and Student Employability,<sup>2</sup> and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.<sup>3</sup> A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review](#)<sup>4</sup> and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code).

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Review themes: [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106).

<sup>3</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us).

<sup>4</sup> Higher Education Review webpages: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review).

## Key findings

### QAA's judgements about the University of Bradford

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at the University of Bradford.

- The setting and maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards **meet** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities for postgraduate research students **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information produced about its provision **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at the University of Bradford.

- The institutional commitment to working with regional employers to embed employability in the undergraduate and postgraduate taught student experience (Expectation B4, Enhancement).
- The effective engagement with student representatives and the students' union (Expectation B5).
- The institutional approach and commitment to diversity and inclusivity in the curriculum and the wider student experience (Enhancement).

### Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to the University of Bradford.

By the end of September 2014:

- establish an appropriate quoracy regulation for Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners (Expectation A6)
- establish and implement appropriate minimum requirements for the training of postgraduate research students who teach or assess (Expectation B3)
- ensure that external examiner reports are made available to students in all partner institutions (Expectations B7 and B10)
- ensure that the procedures for Programme Coordinator visits are fully implemented and robustly monitored (Expectation B10)
- ensure that there is a comprehensive and effective induction for all postgraduate research students (Expectations B11 and B2)
- ensure that there is comprehensive and effective monitoring of the progress of all postgraduate research students, their supervision, and their training needs (Expectation B11).

By the end of January 2015:

- review the risk-based approach to the development, management and oversight of partnership provision to ensure that it is comprehensive and complete, and informs decision-making processes (Expectation B10)
- develop and implement a University-wide strategic approach to the management and monitoring of resources for postgraduate research students (Expectation B11)
- extend to all postgraduate research students the University's effective approach to employability (Expectation B11).

By the end of June 2015:

- develop a school and University-wide research environment that effectively supports all postgraduate research students (Expectation B11).

## **Affirmation of action being taken**

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that the University of Bradford is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The action being taken to improve the timeliness and quality of student feedback in response to issues raised by students and the students' union (Expectation B6, Enhancement).
- The action being taken by the University to manage effectively its collaborative provision through the revised quality assurance procedures (Expectation B10).

## **Theme: Student Employability**

Student employability is a longstanding strength of the University of Bradford. Its corporate strategy is titled 'Making Knowledge Work' and the Vice-Chancellor describes the University as the 'technology university of the North'. It estimates that approximately 70 per cent of programmes have professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation.

The University has an Employability Strategy covering the years 2012-15. Its implementation is outlined in an accompanying action plan, and is overseen by an Employability Steering Group. In practical terms, much of the work is done by the Careers Development Service.

The University is highly integrated into the regional economy. Schools have advisory boards that represent a range of different stakeholders including employers, placement providers and voluntary sector representatives. Employers spoke positively about the University's commitment and its responsiveness to their interests. Employers range from very small companies, for which a student intern can make a material difference, through to regional NHS trusts, which are closely integrated into the University's work.

Employers assume a range of different roles in the delivery and development of the curriculum. In many programmes, especially those facing the NHS, a significant proportion of the students' training and assessment takes place in the workplace. Other programmes are developed on a relatively small scale to meet needs identified by employers.

Placements are prioritised across the University. In addition to placement activity, the University has developed a number of innovative approaches to promoting employability. 'Build My Career' is a virtual career centre, providing a CV builder, an interview simulator and career management tools. The Careers Development Service runs an extracurricular

Summer Experience Programme, providing six-week placements for approximately 40 undergraduates per year. The Bradford Graduate Internships Programme provides internships of three months' duration, most of which are external to the University. The Bradford Graduate Tier 1 Entrepreneurship Scheme is an innovative response to recent changes to laws regarding student visas. Through this scheme, the University sponsors selected students, who demonstrate entrepreneurial potential, to progress onto a 12-month programme of business support following the successful completion of their studies. The Bradford Mentoring Programme brings individual students into contact with career mentors from industry and professional services. The approach to employability, however, tends to prioritise undergraduate and postgraduate taught (PGT) students. The review team identified less systematic commitment to employability for postgraduate research students.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Higher Education Review](#).

## About the University of Bradford

The University of Bradford (the University), a technology-focused university with its origins as Bradford Institute of Technology in the late 1800s, received its Royal Charter in 1966. The University is located within the Bradford city region. The University's City Campus is home to four of the five academic schools with the School of Management being located a short distance away on the Emm Lane campus.

Its origins and technology focus are echoed in its mission statement and corporate strategy, both titled 'Making Knowledge Work'. The University prides itself on a strong tradition and commitment to working in partnership with business, industry and the professions to support the creation of global wealth and well-being through the development of intellectual, cultural, social, economic and technological change.

The University's corporate strategy defines the core mission as:

We are a provider of high-quality teaching, informed by internationally recognised research and knowledge transfer that enables students to achieve their educational aspirations and staff to enhance their careers within an inclusive, supportive and sustainable environment.

The University is divided into five academic schools: engineering and informatics, health studies, life sciences, management (including law), and social and international studies. In addition there is a Graduate School, established in 2000, which delivers research training programmes that complement research training provided by schools and departments.

The University prides itself on its inclusivity and diversity; 48.4 per cent of its young full-time first degree students come from the lowest socioeconomic groups (compared to an England average of 30.9 per cent). Additionally, the proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) students of UK domicile is 60.6 per cent against an England average of 21.3 per cent, the third highest proportion of BME students among all 131 higher education institutions in England.

The University has a large collaborative provision with both overseas and UK partner institutions. However, since 2012 the University has been moving away from a number of partnerships no longer in line with its strategic goals and many UK partnerships and some overseas partnerships have been terminated or are in teach out.

In the academic year 2012-13, the University had over 12,000 students based in the UK (including 1,800 international students) and 5,500 students based overseas, of whom 80 per cent undertook undergraduate programmes and 20 per cent undertook postgraduate

programmes. The University has approximately 500 postgraduate research students, all based at the University and spread across the five schools.

This review took place following a period of significant change at the University involving both academic leadership and academic infrastructure. Notably, Professor Brian Cantor was appointed Vice-Chancellor in October 2013. The post of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) was added to the Senior Management Team in 2011 to drive the learning and teaching agenda. A strategic change programme led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) has sought to deliver a step-change in learning, teaching and assessment practices across the University. The Vice-Chancellor is launching three major initiatives to support the goal to increase student satisfaction and success comprising: a comprehensive review of technology that supports staff and student activities and the production of management information; a staff recruitment campaign to enhance areas of strength in research and teaching; and a marketing campaign to raise the profile of the University to support the recruitment of staff and students from diverse backgrounds.

To ensure academic standards and equivalent experience across the University and partner institutions, an enhanced element of centralised quality management has been introduced alongside clearly defined quality management processes devolved to schools.

The University has identified a number of key challenges. Descriptive statistics demonstrate that white students achieve a higher proportion of good honours degrees compared with BME students. In this regard the University is undertaking focused work to further understand the complex set of factors that impact on student attainment.

The University had a poor Audit of Collaborative Provision in 2010 and key challenges since then have involved restructuring the quality assurance around its collaborative provision and moving the partnerships more in line with its strategic aims. The University has made good progress in response to recommendations from previous QAA reviews. However, concerns highlighted in the 2007 Institutional Audit report relating to the quality of learning opportunities for postgraduate research students have not been fully addressed and this is explored in the section on Expectation B11.

## Explanation of the findings about the University of Bradford

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

# 1 Judgement: Setting and maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards

**Expectation (A1): Each qualification (including those awarded through arrangements with other delivery organisations or support providers) is allocated to the appropriate level in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*.**

## **Quality Code, Chapter A1: The national level**

### **Findings**

1.1 Programme approval panels (for programme approvals and major modifications) and periodic review panels must ensure compliance of programmes with University and external regulations and policy.

1.2 More specifically, programme approval and review panels are required to consider how the intended learning outcomes relate to external reference points, including the FHEQ and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Programme assessment strategy must demonstrate alignment with the FHEQ.

1.3 The University external examiner report template asks whether the standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at the relevant level, and against the FHEQ.

1.4 The University regulations set the volume of study for each award in terms of credit and notional learning hours (timetabled hours, private study and assessment). There are detailed guidelines on the volume of assessment for undergraduate and postgraduate units and programmes of study.

1.5 The University's requirements are sufficiently robust and its processes are appropriately designed to ensure that the outcomes of programmes are matched to qualification descriptors in the FHEQ. The regulations set a volume of study that is sufficient to demonstrate that learning outcomes can be achieved. The relevant provisions allow Expectation A1 to be met.

1.6 The review team scrutinised the University's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of meetings, external examiner reports, programme and module documentation and meetings with staff and students.

1.7 Programme approval and periodic review documentation viewed by the review team confirms that approval and review panels require programme teams to demonstrate that the outcomes of programmes are at the appropriate level and are effectively matched to qualification descriptors in the FHEQ. Panels also require programme teams to demonstrate that assessment strategy aligns with the FHEQ. The programme approval and review documents viewed by the review team demonstrate that these requirements are being satisfied. The associated mapping documents available to the team, including mapping of relevant parts of partner-articulated programmes, contain clear and thorough mapping.

1.8 Programme specifications viewed by the review team confirm that intended learning outcomes are consistent with qualification descriptors in the FHEQ at all levels of learning.

1.9 Completed external examiner reports confirm that the standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at the relevant level, and against the FHEQ, in both home and collaborative provision.



1.10 Programme specifications set out the volume of study for each award in terms of credit and notional learning hours. Module learning hours and volumes of assessment are set out in the module descriptors, which are presented in the University's module descriptor template.

1.11 The review team concludes that the University's qualifications meet Expectation A1 and that the risk in this area is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A2): All higher education programmes of study take account of relevant subject and qualification benchmark statements.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: The subject and qualification level**

**Findings**

1.12 Programme approval and review panels are required to consider how the intended learning outcomes relate to subject benchmark statements and PSRB requirements.

1.13 The University's programme specification templates require an explicit statement of the relationship of the programme to any relevant benchmark statement(s).

1.14 The University external examiner report template asks whether the standards set for the awards are appropriate, with respect to the national benchmarks.

1.15 The University's requirements are sufficiently robust and its processes are appropriately designed to allow Expectation A2 to be met.

1.16 The review team scrutinised the University's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of meetings, external examiner reports, programme specifications and meetings with staff and students.

1.17 Sample documentation viewed by the review team records consideration of the use of benchmark statements as guidance in setting learning outcomes. The team saw examples of clear and careful subject benchmark mapping documents presented at programme approval and review.

1.18 The sample programme specifications viewed by the review team contain explicit statements of the relationship of the programme to any relevant benchmark statement(s).

1.19 Completed external examiner reports confirm that the standards set for the awards are appropriate, with respect to the national benchmarks, in both home and collaborative provision.

1.20 The team saw evidence that programme approval processes take due account of the requirements of PSRBs.

1.21 The review team concludes that the University's higher education programmes of study meet Expectation A2 and that the risk in this area is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3): Higher education providers make available definitive information on the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learner achievements for a programme of study.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: The programme level**

**Findings**

1.22 The Academic Quality Handbook requires programme specifications to make explicit the intended learning outcomes of the programmes, including for any embedded awards, the teaching and learning methods that enable learners to achieve these outcomes and the assessment methods used to demonstrate their achievement.

1.23 The University publishes online guidance on writing a programme specification, together with templates for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

1.24 Proposed programme specifications must be presented and scrutinised at programme approval and programme review, as part of the standard documentation sets.

1.25 The formal process for programme modification incorporates a requirement for the updating of the programme specification.

1.26 All updated and continuing programme specifications must be approved annually by the School Board.

1.27 The University requires definitive programme specifications for each programme to be published on the Academic Quality and Partnerships website before the commencement of the next academic year.

1.28 The University's requirements are sufficiently robust and its processes are appropriately designed to allow Expectation A3 to be met.

1.29 The review team scrutinised the University's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of meetings, programme specifications and meetings with staff and students.

1.30 The review team was able to verify from the available evidence that proposed programme specifications are presented and scrutinised at programme approval and programme review, as part of the standard documentation sets.

1.31 The review team also saw evidence of annual approval of continuing and updated programme specifications by School Boards or School Learning and Teaching Committees.

1.32 Programme specifications for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes viewed by the review team are presented within the University's template. They provide clear and definitive information on the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learner achievements of the programmes (including for embedded awards).

1.33 All the programme specifications viewed by the review team had been recently updated.

1.34 Students are directed to programme specifications via hyperlinks in programme handbooks, in accordance with the University's programme handbook template.

1.35 The University makes available definitive information on the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learner achievements for its programmes of study through

publication of all its programme specifications on the Academic Quality and Partnerships external website. All this information is provided in programme specifications, which are readily accessible online to staff and students of the University and its partners, external examiners, external experts, representatives of PSRBs, employers and other stakeholders.

1.36 The review team concludes that Expectation A3 is met and that the risk in this area is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A4): Higher education providers have in place effective processes to approve and periodically review the validity and relevance of programmes.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A4: Approval and review**

**Findings**

1.37 The University has clear policies and procedures in place for programme approval and review. Senate is the supreme academic authority responsible for overseeing academic quality and standards. It has delegated its authority to approve both undergraduate and PGT programmes and periodic reviews (unless waivers from the regulations or ordinances are requested) to the Learning and Teaching Committee. To maintain oversight, Senate receives the minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee, which summarise observations and resolutions in relation to programme approvals and periodic reviews.

1.38 Programme approval is a two-stage process, with each stage requiring approval at both school and University level. Phase one focuses on the academic and business case and Phase 2 on the design, development and approval of the programme. It is at stage two that detailed consideration is given to ensuring that the proposed programme meets the expectations of external reference points, including the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements, and that curriculum design and assessment strategy will enable students to demonstrate achievement of intended learning outcomes.

1.39 All programmes are subject to periodic review, normally every five years. The process examines the continuing currency of the award, the quality of the student learning experience and the level of student attainment. Course teams are required to present their evaluation, reflections and proposed changes (both in writing and verbally) to an independent panel composed of suitably experienced academic and support staff, external experts, and a student representative for consideration and approval.

1.40 The design of the University's procedures to approve and periodically review the validity and relevance of its programmes allows Expectation A4 to be met.

1.41 The review team looked at the operation of programme approval and review by discussing the processes with staff and students and reading the documentation provided. Policy and guidance documentation, which included the Academic Quality Handbook, the Programme Design and Development Handbook, and guidelines on the volume of assessment, are a clear and useful source of advice to teams on curriculum design, assessment, academic quality processes and the external resources available. The team also looked at the evolution of the processes over time and governance arrangements by reading course approval and review documentation, review schedules, minutes of Phase 1 and 2 course approvals and reviews, School Board minutes, and minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate.

1.42 The review team found that the mechanisms for ensuring standards in the design, approval, and review of programmes are comprehensively documented, understood by staff and that the operation and oversight of the processes, as demonstrated by the minutes of panels and committees, are effective. The mapping against relevant subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ, the involvement of external experts in the approval and review panels and the inclusion of PSRBs/employers in the development team membership ensure the validity and continuing relevance of programmes.

1.43 Overall, the review team found that the evidence confirmed that the procedures work effectively. It is evident that there is externality within the programme development,

approval and review processes, staff are aware of the relevant policy, and actions arising from the approval and review meetings are monitored and completed. The team concludes that Expectation A4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A5): Higher education providers ensure independent and external participation in the management of threshold academic standards.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A5: Externality**

**Findings**

1.44 The University makes extensive use of external input in its quality assurance processes. External examiners are appointed to all taught programmes, including collaborative provision, and their roles and responsibilities for assessment are clearly articulated. External examiners are also appointed for all postgraduate research examinations. For programme approval, major modifications and periodic review, the University uses external experts from its own expert standing panel and representatives from relevant PSRBs on programme approval and review panels. The University also has extensive contact with employers and uses their expertise to inform curriculum developments and provide support for career development in the form of placements, internships, guest lectures and live briefs.

1.45 The design of the University's procedures to engage with external input allows Expectation A5 to be met.

1.46 The review team met with staff, students and employers and looked at the operation of the various quality assurance processes involving external experts by reading the Academic Quality Handbook, and relevant guides, ordinances and regulations, Boards of Examiners minutes and external examiners' reports and action plans, minutes of programme approval meetings, periodic reviews, and minutes of the External Examiner and External Expert Subcommittee and Learning and Teaching Committee.

1.47 The evidence provided by the University clearly shows the scrupulous use of external experts in the examination processes, and external experts and employers in programme design, external experts and PSRBs in programme approval and periodic review, and employers in supporting careers and the development of employability skills. The use of a standing panel of external experts works well. The appointment of external experts follows the same process and level of scrutiny as external examiners and their allocation to the various panels is closely monitored to ensure their allocation is appropriate and individuals are not 'over used' and can retain their independence.

1.48 The review team considers that the policies and processes adopted by the University ensure externality at all levels. Employers are involved in curriculum development, actions from external examiner reports are acted upon and closely monitored, and there are also external members on programme approval and periodic review panels. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation A5 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A6): Higher education providers ensure the assessment of students is robust, valid and reliable and that the award of qualifications and credit are based on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A6: Assessment of achievement of learning outcomes**

**Findings**

1.49 The University recognises that assessment is a key element in the setting and maintenance of academic standards and is the means by which judgements are formed on to the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes of the programme. The University assessment regulations for undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees are part of the University's ordinances and regulations. Guidance and training on the volume of assessment and how to design assessments are provided for staff as part of the course development process. Each course has an assessment strategy embedded in its programme specification, which also includes a link to the regulations and any waivers for that course. As part of the course approval process level learning outcomes are compared to the FHEQ and each assessment is mapped against the programme's learning outcomes.

1.50 Each department has its own procedures for monitoring and approving assessments including sending draft assessments to external examiners for review. The University defines the role, appointment and reporting requirements of external examiners, the conduct of the assessment processes, and the two-tier assessment board process (see paragraph 1.51). Student cohort performance is considered as part of the programme monitoring and enhancement process as well as at Boards of Examiners.

1.51 The membership of Assessment Committees (module examination boards) includes academic staff and approved internal examiners as well as external examiners who are invited but not required to attend. Board of Examiners (progression and award boards) membership consists of academic staff, approved internal examiners, course tutors and personal tutors and the regulations require the attendance (physically or virtually) of external examiners. There is no formal quoracy for either type of board and whether there are sufficient members in attendance to carry out the function of the boards is at the discretion and academic judgement of the chair. The review team **recommends** that by the end of September 2014 the University establish an appropriate quoracy regulation for Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners.

1.52 With the exception of the quoracy arrangements for Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners, the design of the University's assessment regulations and processes allow Expectation A6 to be met.

1.53 The review team tested the assessment arrangements by meeting with staff and students and reviewing the comprehensive documentation provided, which included (in addition to that stated in paragraph 1.50) the guide to recognition of prior learning, minutes of boards, external examiner reports and action plans, student handbooks, the external examiners' information pack, induction arrangements for external examiners and chairs' academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances documentation, and minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee in relation to undergraduate assessment regulations changes.

1.54 Overall, the review team found the various processes to be robust and sound, leading to valid and reliable assessment of the course learning outcomes. Regulations and processes are comprehensively documented, and well understood by both staff and students, although the use of the University's generic grading criteria (characteristics of the level of complexity, demand and relative autonomy expected of each level of the curriculum)



are less well understood. Students are clear about their assessments and the criteria used in determining their achievements against the programme and module learning outcomes.

1.55 External examiners are positive about the variety and types of assessment, the marking standards, and the arrangements for the boards. The processes for dealing with assessment irregularities, which are very rare, do not appear to be documented and staff described a variety of ways in which such occurrences are dealt with. Senior staff said that any incidents of assessment irregularities should be reported to the relevant assessment committee, but the team were unable to confirm that this operates in practice.

1.56 Overall, the review team concludes that the design and operation of the assessment regulations and processes meet Expectation A6. While the team are recommending the introduction of quoracy regulations for the Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners, other aspects of the University's assessment practice are considered to be robust, leading to reliable and valid assessment processes. The review team concludes that the overall risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## Setting and maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards: Summary of findings

1.57 In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook. All of the Expectations for this judgement area were met and the associated levels of risk were low. There was one recommendation in Expectation A6 relating to quoracy for Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners. There were no affirmations or features of good practice.

1.58 In all areas the University has robust and reliable procedures to ensure the setting and maintenance of the threshold academic standards of its awards. The review team therefore concludes that the setting and maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards **meet** UK expectations.

## 2 Judgement: Quality of student learning opportunities

**Expectation (B1): Higher education providers have effective processes for the design and approval of programmes.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme design and approval**

### Findings

2.1 The University has a clear and thorough structure in place for programme design, introduced in 2012. It is overseen by the Learning and Teaching Committee, with delegated powers as a subcommittee of Senate. Its operation is described by a Programme Development and Design Handbook, which is mapped to the Quality Code.

2.2 The process has two stages: Phase 1 focuses on market value and Phase 2 considers academic merit. Progression through the stages is managed by the Academic Quality and Partnerships Office (AQPO), and documented by tracker software.

2.3 The involvement of students is a stated objective of the system. There are also structures in place to ensure the involvement of suitably qualified external experts: in particular, the University maintains a database of external advisers approved by the AQPO. External advice may also inform the initiation and development of programmes via School Advisory Boards.

2.4 The University requires all staff involved in programme design and approval to be trained, and keeps a database of those who have been trained. Staff and students are given the same training.

2.5 The team concludes that the policies and procedures for the design and approval of programmes allow Expectation B1 to be met.

2.6 The review team examined evidence tracing recent programme developments through the stages. The evidence indicates systems operating as outlined in the relevant handbook. There was evidence of the mapping of FHEQ and subject benchmark statements, and also evidence of the appropriate use of external advice at Phase 2.

2.7 The review team questioned staff about the number of programme proposals being rejected at Phase 1. This was explained as a result of the new system becoming established. Rejections are most commonly made at Phase 1 on business grounds, as the University exercises oversight of business planning. Schools are now required to link proposals to the business planning cycle.

2.8 Guidance related to the development of programmes with partners is provided within the Academic Quality Handbook and the Guide to the Management of Higher Education with Partners. There has been no collaborative provision programme development over the past two years. An audit trail was provided for programmes at Craven College, 2010-11, as an example of recent collaborative programme development.

2.9 The review team concludes that Expectation B1 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B2): Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B2: Admissions**

**Findings**

2.10 Although much of the admissions work for PGT programmes is devolved, all PGT offers are checked centrally. These systems are well articulated, underpinned by service-level agreements with schools. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) has oversight of the system, and practice is informed by the Admissions Forum, which includes representatives from each school. Satisfaction rates for the Admissions Office are strong.

2.11 The Admissions Policy states that 'the Head of Admissions (or nominated representative) is responsible for overseeing the establishing and monitoring of all partner institutions entry requirements and associated policies and procedures'.

2.12 The University has a published Admissions Policy and accompanying procedural guidance. It was last reviewed in 2013. Criteria are set for entry to programmes, using the UCAS tariff where appropriate. International qualifications are assessed for equivalence using the UK NARIC database and (where applicable) UCAS Qualification Information Profiles.

2.13 The team concludes that the policies and procedures for design and approval of programmes within the policies and regulations framework allow Expectation B2 to be met.

2.14 Where interviews and/or personal statements are used, there are clear and transparent scoring methods to be implemented. Evidence was provided to demonstrate that applicants are sufficiently informed about these processes.

2.15 Some of the structures in place to smooth the transition to higher education, especially those geared towards Bradford's diverse student population, are innovative and impressive. The Compact Scheme Summer School offers targeted widening participation applicants an award of 30 UCAS points towards their entry tariff in recognition of successful participation. See Expectation B4 for further discussion of these activities. In addition, the University offers a Refreshers Event for mature students, and requires all students to complete a compulsory plagiarism awareness programme. The plagiarism programme appears to be well embedded; the team that generated it was given a teaching award.

2.16 Induction processes for postgraduate research students, by comparison, are devolved to schools and evidence from students indicated that implementation is not consistent. This has led to a recommendation under Expectation B11.

2.17 The review team concludes that Expectation B2 is met and the associated level of risk is low given the evidence from staff and the clear articulation in the regulations and policies.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth, and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.**

**Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching***

2.18 The University has in place a Learning and Teaching Enhancement action plan. The plan has seven key themes: curriculum innovation; staff development and recruitment; developing students' academic, personal and professional skills; the learning environment; enhancing the quality of learning opportunities through partnership with students; technology-enhanced learning; and employability and enterprise.

2.19 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme Board was created to oversee the ongoing development and implementation and enhancements to learning and teaching. This includes the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan 2013-16, implementation of the Curriculum Framework and Employability Strategy and other projects. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Programme Board reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.20 The University created a group which proposed the 'Bradford offer', an initiative that came about as a result of changes in government proposals on the future funding of higher education. The Bradford offer proposed notions to look at improving the student experience and producing added value for students in terms of employability and academic attainment. In light of the Bradford offer, a Curriculum Framework has been introduced and roll-out is due to be completed by the end of 2014-15. The themes of the Curriculum Framework are: Making Knowledge Work, Student Engagement and Development, Inclusive Curriculum and Research Informed Curriculum.

2.21 One of the areas of the Curriculum Framework is Technology-Enhanced Learning. This has led the University to review its virtual learning environment (VLE). The University has put in place training sessions for staff. The University is currently participating in a 'Changing the Learning Landscape' project, which includes looking at the VLE.

2.22 The University has policies and strategies in place to ensure there is inclusivity in the curriculum. Equality and Impact assessments are carried out at programme approval and re-approval. Students also have access to an Equal Opportunities Facilitator. Programmes include how teaching methods are monitored in their critical appraisal for periodic review, to ensure all students are engaged.

2.23 Procedures are in place for accessibility onto campus for students. Reasonable adjustments are put in place for students on placement. Students are provided with an initial screening test when they first arrive to help identify learning disabilities.

2.24 The University has in place Programme Enhancement Plans (PEPs), which review 'real-time' data and information about a programme at the end of each semester; these allow monitoring and review of learning and teaching from that semester. The PEP reports looks at feedback from each stage group on recruitment and selection, student feedback (National Student Survey (NSS), module evaluations, Staff-Student Liaison Committees), student feedback on learning support facilities, issues raised relating to protected groups and external examiner feedback.

2.25 The PEP reports are discussed at the School Learning and Teaching Committee, which advise the School Board. The Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching then collates and reviews the PEPs to write the School Enhancement Plan (SEPs) which review the school-level NSS and key information sets (KIS). The SEPs then report to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, which then reports to Senate. In semester two the SEPs go to the Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Subcommittee, where recommendations are made for University-wide learning and teaching enhancement activity to the Learning and Teaching Committee and then Senate.

2.26 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) has a blog, which updates staff on any changes staff and students need to be made aware of. There are also the learning and teaching open forums which all staff are invited to; these look at different areas of enhancing the student experience.

2.27 Module evaluations are required every two years and are online through 'e-vision'. Module evaluation feedback is presented in module handbooks to allow the new students to see what changes or positive things students have said.

2.28 Each student is provided with Personal Academic Tutors. These tutors are in place to support students through transition, improving students' ability to study, show interest in overall academic and personal welfare, provide a framework and structure for students' personal and professional development and offer advice, support and guidance. Meetings with Personal Academic Tutors can be individual or group.

2.29 Students have access to personal and academic support from a range of support services in the Learner Support Services, the library and the Academic Development Unit. See Expectation B4 for more information.

2.30 All new academic staff are required to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice that leads to eligibility for recognition as a fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Staff have the opportunity to participate in continuing professional development, which includes the Learning and Teaching Professional Development and Recognition Scheme and HEA Recognition.

2.31 The University stated in the self-evaluation document that any research student who wishes to serve as a graduate teaching assistant for the first time is required to attend the relevant training programme organised by the Graduate School, in addition to training provided by the students' own School/Department. However, application of this policy is inconsistent (see below and Expectation B11 for further commentary on this). Students are provided with a module called Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

2.32 The University participated in a project with the HEA and the University of Kingston called 'Outduction', which looked at the final-year experience and developing employability skills, especially through study abroad and placements.

2.33 The policies and procedures of the University foster a culture that allows a student to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth, and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking, and this allows Expectation B3 to be met.

2.34 The team spoke to staff, senior staff, employers, support staff and students. The team viewed evidence provided by the University that included strategies, action plans, committee minutes and examples of policies in practice.

2.35 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan has recently been launched and is being monitored through the Learning and Teaching Committee; the committee receive reports from the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme Board.

2.36 Actions from the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan, for example the Curriculum Framework, are currently being rolled out across the University.

2.37 The Curriculum Framework implementation is being supported by training; staff stated that all programme teams whose programmes were being reviewed have to attend workshops to ensure that all programmes that are being validated or revalidated conform to the specifications set out in the Curriculum Framework. Staff stated that the Curriculum Framework has given an opportunity for programme teams to engage in inclusion in the curriculum. The Curriculum Framework implementation is being supported by a series of four workshops that programme teams are required to attend which are facilitated by the University Centre for Educational Development. It is clear from the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan, programme specifications, and timetable that the Curriculum Framework is being embedded in it.

2.38 The University has effective equality and diversity policies and procedures in place. See the Enhancement Expectation on the effectiveness of the University's engagement with equality and diversity.

2.39 The PEPs are very comprehensive documents that reflect in detail on the different areas they focus on. It is clear in the first-semester PEP that inductions are reflected on and actions are taken forward for next year. In the second-semester PEP programmes also address the NSS, Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) and PSRB enhancements and requirements. The team could see from minutes that the PEPs are discussed at the Programme Enhancement Planning meetings, a subcommittee of the School Learning and Teaching Committees. Staff state that there were lengthy discussions about the PEPs. The SEP actions are monitored at the School Learning and Teaching Committee. The minutes show that the SEPs are discussed at the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Committee looks at institutional themes from the PEPs and SEPs and reports them to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.40 There are examples of where an individual PEP highlighted an area of good practice, which has now been implemented further and provided with further resourcing in the curriculum, and a conference has been held to share the practice in the sector.

2.41 Staff knew about learning and teaching open forums. The team saw the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) blog in use and students commenting on one of the blogs.

2.42 Module evaluations are discussed in the PEPs and SEPs. The University is reviewing module evaluation because the PEPs state that there is a low response rate for module evaluations.

2.43 The University of Bradford Students' Union (UBU) comments in the self-evaluation document that the Personal Academic Tutor system needs improving, because students expect to be contacted by their Personal Academic Tutor but many tutors are also lecturers who are currently researching and therefore do not have enough time. Students stated that the Personal Academic Tutors can be very good and helpful and see you through all three years. Meetings are recorded on 'e-vision'. The students did state, however, that there is a degree of variability; the system itself is good but it depends on the tutor and if students use it. Students also mentioned there are different support mechanisms in place including buddies and student third-year clinics to help first and second-year students. The team

spoke to staff, who stated that students are feeding back on their experience and staff are aware that a consistent experience is needed that is more embedded in the curriculum. It was noted that when personal tutoring worked well, students get a better experience, especially disabled students. Staff gave an example of personal tutoring being a strategic aim and therefore PEPs and SEPs were reporting on this, which allowed innovative solutions to go to the School Boards and to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.44 Students were complimentary of the disability services provided, and the developments of the library over the years. The information students receive about the support they can access and who to contact for reasonable adjustments is clear. Students are complimentary of the Student Support service, which is shown through free text comments on the NSS and the score for personal development being above the national average.

2.45 Staff met by the team confirmed that new staff receive an induction, which allowed them to get to know different people and understand the University and in some cases higher education. Staff have received support from mentors with regular meetings. Staff confirmed that it was a contractual requirement to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice if they did not have an equivalent qualification; staff found the course useful and interesting. Staff were encouraged to go forward to become a fellow of HEA; 43.33 per cent of staff are now fellows. Staff were complimentary of the professional development opportunities for them, including support to complete a PhD.

2.46 Staff stated that the University has a professional development review process after probation which allows staff to liaise with their line manager about professional development. There is a clear Staff Development Policy, which staff are aware of. The Staff Training and Development webpages show a large range of development opportunities for a range of staff. Staff also stated that they participated in peer review and that this was a very structured process. There are clear plans in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan for Staff Development and Recruitment.

2.47 Staff stated that there had been opportunities to attend workshops for technological advancements in learning, and that these had been helpful. There are also podcast and technology learning advisers to run seminars and help support programmes. Students also stated that they had seen the impact the student feedback had on improving the VLE and that essential standards were being developed for the VLE. SEPs also require schools to comment on their progress.

2.48 It is clear from the Employability Strategy and the action plan and meeting with employers that the work carried out on 'Outduction' was implemented into practice by the University by the increase in student internships and placements.

2.49 Students that the review team met stated that they were unaware in some cases of the requirement of graduate teaching assistant training. It was also stated in Staff-Student Liaison Committees that students were unsure what was available and required of them. The response to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) stated that 70 per cent of students had not received formal training. Students who are involved with teaching, assisting in a lab or marking, stated that there was support provided in the classroom, but only a couple had done the training. Graduate teaching assistant training was raised in the 2007 audit and this was viewed at the Learning and Teaching Committee, but the team have been unable to find evidence of further action being taken. The team **recommends** that by September 2014 the University establish and implement appropriate minimum requirements for the training of postgraduate research students who teach or assess.

2.50 The team concludes from looking at evidence and talking to staff and students that Expectation B3 is met and the risk is low.



**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling student development and achievement**

**Findings**

2.51 All schools and Professional Services Directorates are required to develop annual strategic plans aligned to the University strategic aims and priorities, to ensure the effective uses of arrangements and resources to support student development and achievements. The University has an Estates strategy to improve the student experience including investing in learning resources, general teaching accommodation, sports facilities and learning/socialising spaces. IT services report annually and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan supports all this.

2.52 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan has a section on developing students' academic, professional and personal skills. This is supported by the Employability Strategy and action plan which is overseen by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Board.

2.53 The development of employability skills in the schools is being implemented through the Career Development Service Plans. Students are provided with an opportunity to take up placements, study abroad and internships. The Careers Development Service has a targeted approach to supporting employability within programme with low levels of employment. Staff have also visited China to understand recruitment needs. The University holds a careers fair for students. The Career Development Service has increased their activities with employers through the recruitment of full-time staff members.

2.54 The Curriculum Framework's aims include: the development of core graduate attributes, which reflect employability and professionalism; inclusivity and academic development; and ensuring curricula are developed to allow students to achieve their potential. The framework has been developed to include personal development planning throughout the curriculum. It also looks at enhancing the curricula through work experience, placements and community-based projects, live briefs from companies and business.

2.55 University committees, the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee oversee the implementation and evaluations of the strategies above. The Deans and Directors of Professional Services are also responsible for the implementation of University strategy and policy.

2.56 The University has in place PEPs, which are where programme teams reflect on data and student feedback. One area the PEPs report on is student feedback of support services and learning resources; this is then summarised into the SEPs. See Expectation B3 for more information on the PEPs and SEPs.

2.57 The University gives every new student the opportunity to undertake an initial screening for dyslexia, which leads to further testing and consequently support when needed. Students who go on to placements are able to have reasonable adjustments put in place if required. There are policies and procedures for the health, well-being and fitness of students. Students with disabilities are supported individually by the Disabilities Service to assess their learning support needs. Electronic notes are recorded and then circulated appropriately to schools and support services.

2.58 Students are provided with dedicated support from Learner Support Services, the Academic Development Unit and Learner Development Unit which provide academic skills

through one-to-one workshops and resources. Students are provided with language support and Career Development Services to help with academic work and achievement. Some departments have implemented a Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme, to help with first-year transition. Students are trained to support first-year students.

2.59 Students are provided with library support through subject librarians and resources for students including distance learning students. Students are also required to undertake a plagiarism awareness programme prior to submitting their first assignment. Students are provided with a range of different pieces of software to support their experience. Students have access to open access computers.

2.60 Students are provided with a Refreshers Fayre to help with transition and for the first time a pilot summer school was carried out in 2013 to support students from first year to second year, who were required to undertake supplementary assessment. The Academic Development Unit has participated in a piece of HEA research on 'Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: What Works? Student Retention & Success programme'.

2.61 See Expectation B3 for information on staff development.

2.62 Students are provided with opportunities to develop their personal and professional potential through UBU's clubs and societies and volunteering; these are communicated to students through websites, handbooks and the UBU student guide. There is also space for all clubs and societies to meet up. There is the 'Room 101' initiative, which allows international students to integrate with each other and develop skills in leading language classes.

2.63 The University has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, and these allow Expectation B4 to be met.

2.64 The team spoke to staff, senior staff, employers, support staff and students. The team viewed evidence provided by the University that included strategies, action plans, committee minutes and examples of policies in practice.

2.65 The University monitors its Estates Strategy and the use and enhancement of teaching and learning spaces is monitored and approved by the Academic Strategic Performance Committee. The IT services annual report clearly shows how they have been taking on board student feedback about their services. The Estates Strategy was created through contributions by staff and student feedback. The Estates Strategy is supported by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan. Evidence showed the schools' and Professional Services Directorates' plans were discussed at the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee, and then reported to Council.

2.66 The team met a range of employers from different companies with different interactions with the University, for example summer internships, placements and curriculum design. The employers were very complimentary about the Careers Development Service; they stated that the information provided for the employer and the student was clear and if there were any issues they all had good links to contacts within the University. Students stated that they were supported well on placement and that there were placement link tutors in place, though sometimes the level of support could depend on the member of staff. Some employers have had support from the University to put in place a structure to allow an internship or placement to develop.

2.67 There are different methods to get students involved with placements and internships. The employers have worked with the University and given feedback and have

been asked to give feedback on areas that could improve, for example covering letters and timing of placements. Through this the employers have seen an improvement. Employers have good support from the University when needing to make reasonable adjustments. Some employers work with departments on assessments and projects to help create a 'real-life' experience. Through this the employers were supported throughout. Employers stated the careers fair was useful and this was echoed by the students. The institutional commitment to working with regional employers to embed employability in the undergraduate and PGT student experience is **good practice**.

2.68 Staff are provided with the very clear Guide to the Management of Placements and Study Abroad. Placement and study abroad information is in programme specifications. The team found when looking through the Employability Strategy and the action plan that it was more orientated towards undergraduate students than postgraduate students. Staff agreed with this, as they had been working on the undergraduate Curriculum Framework, and stated that next year there were going to be developments for postgraduate students, but that all extracurricular activities were open to all students.

2.69 The Career Development Service Review has quarterly planning meetings to review and look at their services. It also reports annually on the DLHE to the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee and the Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Subcommittee.

2.70 The team saw examples of the Curriculum Framework being implemented in programme specifications. There are different methods in the schools of implementing personal development planning through set proformas, or a newly introduced e-portfolio system and Personal Academic Tutor guidance. It is also implemented in the programme specification and modules, which students mentioned.

2.71 The team found examples of where the programme teams have incorporated students' feedback on the support services into the PEPs. These are then taken forward into the SEPs; the actions from the SEPs are monitored by the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.72 Students have access to a wide range of support for academic and personal support. The policy is clear for the health, well-being and fitness of students. Students and student representatives were complimentary of the disability service and the Learning Development Unit. Student support services have received positive feedback from students in the NSS and the personal development scores are above the national average in the NSS. Students were complimentary of the subject librarians and the developments over the year in the library. Students confirmed that they experience an initial screening for dyslexia when they first arrive and an online plagiarism course. Students also confirmed there is good UBU and University language support.

2.73 Students receive an induction which tells them about the different opportunities and receive handbooks and information. During enrolment students who are part of clubs and societies talk to students under the initiative 'Team Bradford'. Students responded positively to 'Student Central' that provides space for students to socialise, study and hold meetings for clubs and societies.

2.74 Students talked about peer-to-peer systems in place in some departments to support students and that there are also drop-in clinics run with students.

2.75 The team concludes after looking at evidence and talking to staff and students that the University meets Expectation B4 and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student engagement**

**Findings**

2.76 The University and UBU have a culture of working in partnership with the students. Currently the University and UBU are creating a Student Engagement Strategy. The Student Charter was created in October 2012 by the University in collaboration with UBU. The Student Charter was launched with a signing event with staff and students. UBU have created an initiative called 'Team Bradford', supported by the University, which is designed to create staff and student engagement. The publication of the Student Charter was also brought in under this initiative.

2.77 The Student Experience and Success Team reviewed the Student Representation Policy in 2012-13 through discussion with UBU and a range of academic and support staff. This was approved by Senate. A Student Representation Coordinator has been employed jointly by the University and UBU as an outcome of the review. The new Student Representation Policy sets out the role of the University, UBU, the election process, the role of student representatives and school representatives, and how the Staff-Student Liaison Committees work. Staff and students are given the 'Student Representation Handbook: A Guide for Staff and Students' which explains the student representation system and staff have been given briefing sessions. Student representatives are provided with training that covers the NSS, Student Charter and their role. Students who are unable to attend the training are provided with online training through 'Blackboard'. The training finishes with quizzes to check student representatives' knowledge. Student representatives are also given access to staff development training.

2.78 The Learning and Teaching Committee monitors the new Student Representation Policy. The Student Representation Coordinator also monitors the engagement of student representatives at Staff-Student Liaison Committees and training.

2.79 Students are able to feed back about their student experience through different channels. These include surveys, module evaluations, user feedback on services, focus groups, research, interviews, getting involved with UBU and being a student representative. Module evaluation outcomes are stated in the module handbook. Undergraduate, postgraduate and postgraduate research student representatives are able to represent student views at Staff-Student Liaison Committees. The Student Representative Coordinator and the Academic Affairs Officer hold monthly meetings for all student representatives.

2.80 UBU sabbatical officers meet with senior members of University staff to discuss matters in the Student Affairs Group. They also sit on Senate, committees of Senate and other appropriate committees and working groups. There is one school representative from each school on Senate, and student representation on the School Board, School Learning and Teaching Committee, University Committee for Ethics Research, Equality and Diversity Committee, Research and Knowledge Transfer and Learning and Teaching Committee. Sabbatical officers meet informally with key senior members of staff with regards to the student experience, for example Head of Learning Student Services.

2.81 The University runs the NSS, Bradford Satisfaction Survey, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and PRES. The University looks at the survey data at an institutional level through the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee and the Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Subcommittee of the Learning and Teaching

Committee. There are some 'you said, we did' examples on the student survey website, and a presentation that staff can show students on the NSS, which shows what has been improved. The University has PEPs which are summarised in the SEPs. Survey data is addressed in semester-two SEPs which are discussed at the Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Subcommittee and the School Board and Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.82 The University has policies and procedures in place to make deliberate steps to engage with all students, individually and collectively, therefore allowing Expectation B5 to be met.

2.83 The team looked at evidence provided by the University and UBU and met with students and student representatives. The evidence provided includes the Student Charter, policies, handbooks, student representative training material and committee minutes.

2.84 The evidence received and the meetings with staff and students clearly show that there are deliberate steps in place to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The Student Charter clearly sets out what the students can expect from the University and UBU.

2.85 Students had heard of the Student Charter and two of the students were involved in a current review of the Student Charter and felt their views were being listened to. Postgraduate research students stated that they had seen the Student Charter but that it was not very useful for postgraduate research students. The University is considering this in the Student Charter review currently underway. Taught students were complimentary of the 'Team Bradford' initiative and commented that students were given Team Bradford materials, for example a wristband and bag that held useful documents in it, so that they felt welcomed. The UBU works with the University on enrolment and induction through the ethos of Team Bradford. It also allows the University and UBU to celebrate success. Some students indicated that they have had a positive experience of Team Bradford and valued the broad range of activities, whereas others indicated the experience varied between schools, but UBU state that staff have been engaging with the concept.

2.86 The revised student representation system has only been in place for the academic year 2013-14. The Student Representation Policy clearly articulates the roles of the University, UBU, the election process, the student representative roles and how the Staff-Student Liaison Committees work. The system is also consistently articulated in the programme, student and postgraduate research handbooks. Teaching staff were complimentary of the student representatives and the rapport they had built up with them. Students knew who their student representative was and that they could go to them with any issues. Postgraduate research students were aware of who their student representative was and some were active representatives.

2.87 The student representative training is very comprehensive and checks that students understand the training with quizzes. Student representatives were complimentary of the training they receive and demonstrated to the team they knew how to deal with different types of students' issues. Students are also aware of the information available to the student representatives on the VLE. A mid-year review of the Student Representation Policy showed that there had been an increase from last year of student reps attending the training.

2.88 Evidence from the Student Representative Coordinators' mid-year review of the student representative system shows that implementation so far has gone well, but enhancements could be made. The mid-year report states that the style of Staff-Student Liaison Committee minutes could be more consistent and set agenda items could be introduced. The team also found that there was inconsistent discussion of items, for example external examiner reports and survey data, and that the minutes varied in quality. The mid-

year review action plan has shown where there are clear successes, but also areas that need to be enhanced, for example engaging with hard-to-reach groups. Therefore the action plan shows that the University and UBU are monitoring the progress of the system.

2.89 Student representatives were complimentary of the Staff-Student Liaison Committees and felt that actions were taken forward. There was an example of one programme having a Staff-Student Liaison Committee with students leading the meeting and students hold staff to account for their individual actions. The minutes of these meetings are posted on the VLE, although the mid-year review indicates that this is inconsistent across the schools. Student representatives state that students who are not representatives find out about changes through social media, the student radio show or the website. Students' representatives also engage in communicating change. Postgraduate research representatives had a mixed experience of their actions being taken forward and found that University-wide issues were not taken forward. Staff-Student Liaison Committee minutes are taken to School Learning and Teaching Committees.

2.90 The team could see from evidence and talking to student representatives that the new school representatives were representing students and student representatives on a number of different committees of the University, and minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee show engagement with the student experience.

2.91 The channels that students can feed back through are clearly and consistently communicated through programme handbooks, the Student Representation Policy, student handbooks and the student experience webpages about surveys. Module evaluation outcomes are stated in the module handbook and sometimes at the beginning of the module.

2.92 The effective engagement with student representatives and the students' union is **good practice**.

2.93 The team concludes that Expectation B5 is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**



**Expectation (B6): Higher education providers ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to show they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award of a qualification or credit.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning**

**Findings**

2.94 The University provides students with a range of opportunities to engage in assessment and has assessment regulations, policies and practices that are aligned to the Quality Code, FHEQ and subject benchmark statements.

2.95 Assessment approaches and practices are articulated within various documents including the University Ordinances and Regulations, the Administrative Regulations Relating to Assessment (Version 1.0) 2013-2014, the Academic Quality Handbook, the Student Charter and student handbooks. University-wide grading criteria were approved by Senate in April 2011 to ensure consistency of practice across the University. All University programmes are taught and assessed in English, including franchised programmes and programmes validated for off-site delivery.

2.96 The policies and procedures of the University allow Expectation B6 to be met.

2.97 The review team looked at the operation and application of assessment by talking to staff and students, and reading the minutes and papers of meetings that staff and students attend.

2.98 Subject benchmark statements are used by University academics in the preparation of programme specifications to assist in the setting and maintenance of academic standards in assessment. The University has modular regulations which set the pass mark boundaries and compensation levels permitted for assessment across all of the taught courses, with evidence of a policy of mapping module learning outcomes to assessment. The University had participated in an HEA-funded initiative to assist in its quest to enhance assessment strategies and practices at programme level. The University has new and clear regulations relating to the role and remit of Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners. Some of these regulations and practices were new and only in operation from September 2013 and although it is very early to evaluate them, they appear to be working effectively.

2.99 PEPs, SEPs and regular periodic reviews are used to monitor and maintain quality and standards. The external examiners' annual report, presented to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), requires external examiners to comment on assessment practices and the appropriateness of assessment in relation to learning outcomes and the quality of feedback to students. The University has recently introduced a Curriculum Framework to support assessment, and student assessment choice, but there was evidence that this was not fully understood by staff and not fully embedded in academic staff practices. Students are made aware of PSRB assessment requirements in student and programme handbooks.

2.100 To support student learning and achievement, the University has introduced a post of Attainment Officer to analyse and support student achievement through assessment approaches and strategies. However, the review team found that it was too early, and there was not enough initial evidence, to determine the success of this initiative. The University indicated that it was moving from a culture of sanctioning special adjustments to help students with diverse needs, towards a more universal educational design that is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of all learners. A tool for an equality impact assessment of

curricula has been developed by the University Equality and Diversity Unit and is used as part of the programme design, development and approval process.

2.101 The University, through AQPO, monitors Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners and confirms attendance by external examiners. University Academic Quality Officers attend all Boards of Examiners. Guidelines on the preparation and conduct of Boards of Examiners, including roles and responsibilities, are issued each academic year. Chairs of Boards of Examiners are trained and meet twice per year with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) to discuss changes to assessment and examination regulations.

2.102 The University has published regulations covering the presentation of work for assessment and examination by all students registered on taught and research programmes of study. Students are made aware of plagiarism and academic misconduct at induction, and through student handbooks, and assessments are tested for plagiarism.

2.103 Schools publish examination and assessment dates and communicate these to students at the start of their course and through student handbooks. The University publishes guidelines on the volume and timing of assessment to staff to guide them on the design and development of assessment in modules and programmes of study.

2.104 University-wide grading criteria are in place with evidence of marking schemes at school level conforming to institutional grading criteria. Students access their individual marks via 'e-vision', a web portal of the University's Student Administration Information Navigation Tracking System.

2.105 The University informed the review team that the timeliness and quality of feedback on assessment was an area of concern. The University is aware of student concerns on the consistency and timeliness of feedback across schools and has been actively tackling the problem by requiring programme teams to develop and publish clear strategies for summative and formative feedback; and by defined University-wide timescales for the provision of feedback which were approved by the University Learning and Teaching Committee and embedded in the Student Charter. The review team **affirms** the action being taken to improve the timeliness and quality of student feedback in response to issues raised by students and the UBU.

2.106 The review team found evidence of new staff induction, development and training. Staff who do not hold a formal teaching qualification are required, as a condition of probation, to undertake the University Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice which leads to fellowship of the HEA. Other initiatives include Peer Supported Review of Teaching Practice and staff development seminars arranged by the Centre for Educational Development on student assessment. The University runs an annual conference of Learning, Teaching and Assessment, used as a vehicle for discussing pedagogical development and sharing good practice. All of these initiatives are discussed fully under Expectation B3.

2.107 Overall, the review team concludes that the University is engaged with a range of approaches to assessment design and grading and meets Expectation B6, with systems and approaches in place at institutional level to ensure that the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## **Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B7: External examining**

#### **Findings**

2.108 The University's policy and procedures for the use of external examiners are described in Section 5 of its Academic Quality Handbook. Institutional oversight of the policies and practices of external examining, and compliance with the Quality Code, is undertaken by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) on behalf of Senate. This oversight is supported by the Academic Quality Officer (External Examiners) and the External Examiners and External Experts Subcommittee that reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University.

2.109 The policies and procedures of the University allow Expectation B7 to be met.

2.110 The review team tested the application of the policies and procedures by scrutinising a range of external examiner reports, the University's responses to those reports and the way in which the reports' findings were considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The team also discussed the sharing and publication of external examiner reports with students.

2.111 University guidance on external examining was developed in accordance with the Quality Code and external examiners are provided with guidance including a Board of Examiners pack. External examiners are appointed from industry and business as well as from academia and independent advisers whose authority is derived from their knowledge of the discipline and experience of assessment. Information supporting external examiners is provided and external examiners are required to attend a formal induction session before being used on examination boards.

2.112 To fulfil their role, external examiners are required to review assessment briefs and criteria, to confirm marks awarded, to attend the relevant Boards of Examiners, and to submit an annual report to confirm the extent to which the University is fulfilling its objectives in respect of the standards of its awards and student achievement.

2.113 The external examiner reports are discussed at School Boards and reported upon in PEPs. Formal responses to external examiner reports are compiled by programme teams and returned to respective external examiners with a formal response from the University. An annual review report prepared by the Academic Quality Officer (External Examiners) is presented to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, enabling it to address issues for enhancement, sharing good practice and review statistical comparisons with previous years. The team regarded external examiner reports and the process of University scrutiny and oversight as fit for purpose.

2.114 The nomination of external examiners rests with the schools, but appointments are formally approved by Senate via the External Examiners and External Experts Subcommittee. Nominations are not automatically approved and a robust process is in place to select, approve and monitor external examiner nominations and appointment.

2.115 The University expressed concerns that in the past attendance by external examiners at boards fell below expectations. This was also noted both in the last Institutional Audit report and Audit of Collaborative Provision. The University indicated that significant steps have been taken to improve the levels of attendance. The University prescribes the terms of reference and membership of Assessment Committees and Examination Boards in its Administrative Regulations Relating to Assessment. However, these regulations are

unclear as to quoracy of membership at Assessment Committees and Boards of Examiners. This has led to a recommendation under Expectation A6.

2.116 The University makes external examiner reports available to students through student representatives and full reports are available on request from the Academic Quality Officer (External Examiners). Student representatives are introduced to the concept of external examining during student representation training programmes and student engagement with the response process is facilitated via the Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings and student membership of school and University committees. Students confirmed they received access to external examiner reports, mainly through Staff-Student Liaison Committees, but the practice of publishing external examiner reports, and the consistency of approach to dissemination of reports, was unclear to many students. UBU are encouraging student representatives to engage more with external examiner reports and to understand their importance as an oversight mechanism.

2.117 The procedures for sharing external examiners' report with students at partner colleges are less clear and students who met the review team from home and overseas partners had no knowledge of the reports or their use. The review team **recommends** that by September 2014 the University ensure that external examiner reports are made available to students in all partner institutions.

2.118 Notwithstanding this recommendation, the review team concludes that the University has created procedures and policies to ensure institutional oversight of external examining and make scrupulous use of external examiners and, therefore, that Expectation B7 is met, with a low risk.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B8): Higher education providers have effective procedures in place to routinely monitor and periodically review programmes.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review**

**Findings**

2.119 The University has introduced an 'enhancement approach' to programme monitoring and periodic review. The system is outlined in the Academic Quality Handbook, and is framed to comply with the Quality Code. It is managed by AQPO and overseen by the Learning and Teaching Committee, with delegated powers from Senate. The University states that its systems are aligned with the Quality Code and include the appropriate use of external reference points, including qualification and credit frameworks, subject benchmark statements and the involvement of PSRBs as appropriate

2.120 The system comprises three layers of review. PEPs are completed for every programme twice in each academic year. The PEPs are in turn considered in the preparation of SEPs, also produced twice per year and presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee. PEPs and SEPs are iterative, requiring programme and school managers to report on progress since the previous report was submitted. Periodic programme review is undertaken every five years.

2.121 The policies and procedures of the University allow Expectation B8 to be met.

2.122 The system of PEPs and SEPs is relatively new but appears to be operating successfully. The review team was given evidence of recent PEPs and SEPs. In addition, the review team saw evidence of how school enhancement plans are implemented and monitored at school level. Deans can follow the progress of documents through an online tracker system. Staff demonstrated strong levels of awareness of the system. Most evidence therefore indicates that this system is working, although there is some evidence of deadlines being missed.

2.123 The review team saw evidence of periodic review events. It also saw papers reporting outcomes of periodic reviews to the Learning and Teaching Committee, and subsequently to Senate. As a result of periodic review, a programme will be either: approved for a further five years, approved subject to further requirements, or not approved.

2.124 A strong commitment both to external input and student involvement underpins the system. External examiner reports are routinely considered in PEPs, and in turn PEPs are circulated to external examiners. Periodic review panels must include student representation and an external expert, as well as trained staff from outside the relevant school.

2.125 The University requires all staff and students involved in periodic review to be trained. The review team saw evidence of the training programme. Students are trained in the same way as staff reviewers.

2.126 Collaborative programmes are integrated into the University's systems of monitoring and review. Home schools are responsible for collaborative PEPs, and these are incorporated into SEPs. Periodic reviews follow the same process for collaborative provision as for home-delivered programmes.

2.127 Processes for programme suspension and withdrawal are outlined in the Academic Quality Handbook. The review team saw evidence of programme withdrawals and associated teach-out strategies, particularly those involving collaborative provision. It also met with students taking programmes in teach-out phase, who were happy with the quality of delivery.

2.128 The review team concludes that Expectation B8 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have fair, effective and timely procedures for handling students' complaints and academic appeals.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B9: Complaints and student appeals**

**Findings**

2.129 The University has policies and procedures for managing complaints and appeals and publishes these on its student homepage and via a web link in student handbooks. These policies and procedures apply to students studying with partners, on placement or engaged in work-based learning. A mapping exercise was undertaken by the University to demonstrate alignment with the Quality Code which was submitted to, and approved by, the Learning and Teaching Committee in January 2014. The complaints and appeals processes are managed by the Legal and Governance team in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. The University reports annually on complaints and appeals.

2.130 The procedures of the University allow Expectation B9 to be met.

2.131 The review team tested the operation of the complaints and appeals procedures by talking to students and their representatives, talking to staff, and scrutinising the guidance given to staff and students related to appeal procedures and complaints procedures and by reading the minutes, and related documents, of the Learning and Teaching Committee on monitoring data and supporting recommendations on appeals and complaints.

2.132 The University appeals process comprises two main stages: the first being consideration at local school level whereupon an outcome letter is issued. Students may escalate their appeal to the second and final stage, consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development), after which a completion of procedures letter is issued. Students can only appeal once they have had a result confirmed at a Board of Examiners. Information is provided in the student handbook.

2.133 The complaints process comprises three stages. Stage one is school-level consideration, stage two is escalation to the Complaints and Appeals Manager (CAM), who oversees the process and employs senior academics to investigate complex cases, and if the student remains dissatisfied, stage three is consideration by a Student Complaints Committee, following which a completion of procedures letter is issued.

2.134 Students are aware of the existence of the appeals and complaints procedures, which are published on the student homepage. Students also receive good access to support and advice. UBU comments favourably on the Quick Guide for Students and states that advice from the Students' Union Advice Centre is valued. Students are encouraged to seek support from Student Union Advisers or Student Union Sabbatical Officers in the preparation of complaints and appeals. Students with disabilities are advised to seek assistance from the Disability Office.

2.135 Appeals from students at partner organisations are submitted to the home school responsible for the programme of study at the University. The procedures for considering appeals from students at partner organisations are identical to those for students studying on the Bradford campus and are codified in a document entitled Appeals and Complaints by Students at Partner Organisations. UBU noted that its Advice Centre received an increasing number of requests for advice from students studying at partner institutions but also indicated that the University had consulted widely relating to changes to the academic year with the intention of ensuring that academic appeals are dealt with earlier and therefore progression issues are resolved before the start of the following academic year. The review

team noted the role and involvement of UBU in helping to define the new appeals and complaints procedures and policies.

2.136 Overall, the review team regarded the design and operation of the University's complaints and appeals procedures as effective, with clear evidence of procedures and policies available to staff and students. The team concludes, therefore, that Expectation B9 is met, with a low risk.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**



**Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others**

## **Findings**

2.137 Approximately one third of the University's students are studying with partners at home or overseas. The University adopts a risk-based approach to the strategic oversight of the approval, monitoring and review of higher education with others which has recently undergone significant change. A Partnership Strategy provides the context for the maintenance and development of partnerships and a Guide to the Management of Higher Education with Partners describes the processes by which new partners and programmes are approved, monitored and reviewed together with other aspects including contractual arrangements, responsibility for admissions, information to students, and certificates and awards. Programme Coordinators visit partners twice yearly and each partnership is reviewed annually by undergoing an annual 'health check' by a Partnership Board and a formal quinquennial Partnership Review. Courses and modules are subject to the same monitoring processes as those applied to provision within the University.

2.138 Governance is exercised through the University's Learning and Teaching Committee and its Academic Partnership Subcommittee with strategic leadership provided through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching).

2.139 The University has in place an appropriate framework for the management of higher education with others that allows Expectation B10 to be met.

2.140 The team explored the effectiveness of the arrangements through scrutiny of the reporting and monitoring processes in operation, school and University committee papers, discussions with students in partner organisations and University staff, and by examining legal and other documentation.

2.141 The new processes have been relatively recently introduced and there have been no new partnership agreements under the new arrangements and not all schools have approved new courses with partners. Thus the team was unable to assess in full the effectiveness of the new arrangements. Legally binding agreements cover partnerships and while some of these had been in operation for a considerable time, the team was informed that, under the new processes, these would be reviewed and revised as part of the quinquennial review of partnerships. The University is withdrawing from a number of arrangements at home and overseas and the team considers that this is being managed effectively according to the new procedures. The team **affirms** the action being taken by the University to manage effectively its collaborative provision through the revised quality assurance procedures.

2.142 The risk-based approach includes a risk register used by APSC to assess and manage partnerships. The risk register does not include partnerships in the process of being terminated which the University itself acknowledges to be high risk. Furthermore, the relationship between the risk register and the University's risk-based approach to the procedures for the delegation of admission processes to partners is unclear. The team **recommends** that by the end of January 2015 the University review its use of the risk register and its risk-based approach to the development, management and oversight of

partnership provision to ensure that it is comprehensive and complete, and informs decision-making processes.

2.143 The University states that twice-yearly Programme Coordinator visits and reports provide crucial information about the quality of learning opportunities at partner institutions. Reports are completed to a common format and those seen by the team were detailed and helpful in identifying issues and confirming that University expectations are being met by partners. The reports are used to inform monitoring processes and Partnership Boards. AQPO compile a central register of planned and complete visits. The information presented to the team for the last full year indicates that around half the expected reports of visits had not been recorded. Thus there is no central confirmation that visits have been conducted in line with University policy. Given the importance placed on Programme Coordinator visits, the review team **recommends** that by the end of September 2014 the University ensure that the procedures for Programme Coordinator visits are fully implemented and robustly monitored.

2.144 External examining and annual monitoring processes function effectively, enabling the University to ensure the comparability of standards and identify issues to enhance the quality of the learning experience in individual partners. Students in some partnership arrangements have no knowledge of external examiner reports. The University is aware of this issue which it states arose, in part, from cultural issues and is working to address it. The recommendation in Expectation B7 that external examiner reports are made available to students in all partner institutions is also relevant to this Expectation.

2.145 Arrangements for the approval and monitoring of placement provision are well established and effectively coordinated. Depending on the nature of the arrangements, these may be through schools or the University's Career Development Service.

2.146 Overall, the review team considers that the University has in place effective procedures for managing higher education provision with others. The team concludes that Expectation B10 is met, but there is a moderate risk posed by the extent and complexity of some of the partnership arrangements and by the changes underway and planned.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Moderate**

**Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.**

### **Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research degrees***

#### **Findings**

2.147 The University's policy, procedures and guidelines relating to research degrees are set out on a dedicated website. Responsibility for research degrees resides with the Research Degrees Committee which reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee. A Dean of Graduate Studies provides academic leadership at institutional level supporting Directors of Postgraduate Research in each school. A Graduate School has responsibility for delivering research training that complements the specialist training provided at local level.

2.148 The University is in the process of reviewing the Graduate School and its approach to the support of postgraduate research. Student feedback is gathered through Staff-Student Liaison Committees and the University uses PRES to benchmark its practices. It is also implementing an in-house version of PRES which has been developed in conjunction with students. A Postgraduate Research Student Forum provides an informal opportunity for research students to raise issues.

2.149 Schools are responsible for the selection, admission, supervision and management of research students. Each research student completes an annual progress report form which covers progress, training needs and supervision. The annual monitoring forms Part A and Part B are both signed by the student when they are completed. The forms are returned to a departmental administrator for processing. The appointment of examiners is considered by the Directors of Postgraduate Research on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee. Each viva has an independent chair.

2.150 The team considers that the University's arrangements for postgraduate research students provide an appropriate framework to secure the standards of research awards and the support of research students and thus allow Expectation B11 to be met.

2.151 The team explored the implementation of the framework through discussions with research supervisors and research students and through a consideration of the operation of the Research Degrees Committee and Staff-Student Liaison Committees.

2.152 The processes for the appointment of supervisors and for the assessment of students operate effectively. The team heard of considerable variation across the schools in the level and quality of supervisory support that students receive. In some schools there is an effective research environment and students have regular and effective contact with their supervisors but this is not uniformly the case.

2.153 Some students had an effective induction while others stated that they had received no induction either centrally or within schools. Although the Graduate School provides a corporate induction programme, without local communication and support combined with effective local induction some students are left unclear about what they need to do to be successful in their studies and about the support available to them as they progress. The review team **recommends** that by the end of September 2014 the University ensure that there is a comprehensive and effective induction for all postgraduate research students.

2.154 Students who had engaged with the annual reporting process reported that it is helpful in enabling them to monitor their progress and identify further training and development needs. Central data indicates that a considerable number of these reviews are not completed. The University's records show that, on aggregate, in 2011-12 only 62 per cent of research students completed these reviews, and that within individual schools the response rate was lower still. Moreover, several of the students whom the review team met who had completed the review felt that the issues they had raised had not been addressed. Students from all schools reported that once the forms were complete and sent then they heard nothing further. Consequently, students felt that their training and development needs were not being systematically addressed. The forms also provide an opportunity to comment on the supervision they receive and provide a link to additional routes to raise concerns about supervision. Despite this, some students were unclear about how to raise issues about supervision particularly where their supervisor was a senior member of staff. The team **recommends** that by the end of September 2014 the University ensure that there is comprehensive and effective monitoring of the progress of all postgraduate research students, their supervision and their training needs.

2.155 Students were generally positive about access to learning resources for their studies and welcomed the steps that had been taken to create a quiet space within the library which facilitated postgraduate study. Some students have access to funding to support their professional development and to cover other costs but this varies considerably across schools. While this variation may arise because of the source of funding students receive, the variation across schools causes considerable disquiet among the student body. Students in some schools raised concerns about access to the necessary resources to undertake their studies including access to IT, printing and photocopying and having an appropriate space in which to work. Raising these issues through internal channels had not led to a satisfactory resolution. The team **recommends** that by the end of January 2015 the University develop and implement a University-wide strategic approach to the management and monitoring of resources for postgraduate research students.

2.156 There are effective research environments in some schools where students have regular meetings with research-active staff and other students augmented by external speakers. This supports the development of an effective research culture. Students from other schools stated that they rarely met other students and that the opportunities to discuss research interests with staff were limited. All students commented on the limited University-wide forums in which to share research experiences and practices. The team **recommends** that by the end of June 2015 the University develop a school and University-wide research environment that effectively supports all postgraduate research students.

2.157 Research students across all schools felt that there was limited support and guidance for them on future career choice and their employability. The Career Development Service was considered as mainly providing support for students on taught programmes. Consequently, the team **recommends** that by the end of January 2015 the University extend to all postgraduate research students its effective approach to employability.

2.158 The concerns raised by the research students in discussions with the team reflect those highlighted through the recently introduced Staff-Student Liaison Committees and the PRES survey, of which the University is aware. The University is undertaking a review of the Graduate School and postgraduate research. The team considers that the University has been slow to respond to the concerns of research students, some of which had been identified in the previous audit report and which students stated they had regularly raised with the University.

2.159 Research students who teach or assess are not required to undertake any formal training. This issue is explored further under Expectation B3 and has led to a recommendation there.

2.160 The review team considers that research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards. However, this environment does not offer all students the quality opportunities and support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation B11 is not met but the risk is moderate rather than serious since it impacts largely on students in specific schools.

**Expectation: Not met**  
**Level of risk: Moderate**

## Quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.161 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook.

2.162 The team noted that Expectations B1 to B10 were met and the associated level of risk in all but one case was low. The exception was Expectation B10 where the team judged that while significant progress had been made by the University since the last Audit of Collaborative Provision, some of the new processes were as yet untried and the nature of the collaborative partnership arrangements was complex. The team therefore judged this Expectation as moderate risk. The team noted that there were two areas of good practice highlighted (Expectations B4 and B5), two affirmations (Expectations B6 and B10) and four recommendations (Expectations B3, B7 and two in Expectation B10). Of these recommendations, two relate to B10 and contribute to the moderate risk rating, and one relates to the training of postgraduate research students who teach and so is also related to B11.

2.163 In terms of postgraduate research students, the team looked particularly at Expectation B11 while also taking into account relevant factors from the other Expectations in this judgement area. The team noted particularly the variability in the experience of postgraduate research students in different schools, as highlighted by the students, the self-evaluation document and the PRES. This variability is apparent in several areas including facilities, supervision, training and the research environment. The team further noted that there are five recommendations relating to this Expectation and that the recommendation in Expectation B3 relating to the training of postgraduate research students who teach is also germane to Expectation B11. There are no areas of good practice or affirmations relating to this Expectation. Finally, the team noted that many of the issues it found were also reported on in the last Institutional Audit in 2007 and evident in the more recent PRES and minutes of the Research Degrees Committee, indicating that the University is slow to respond and may not be fully aware of the significance of certain issues.

2.164 Putting all of this together, the review team concludes that the discrepancy it identified between the quality of learning opportunities available to undergraduate and taught postgraduate students and that for postgraduate research students meant that, pursuant to paragraph 19 of the published handbook, it was appropriate to differentiate the judgement between these two categories or levels.

2.165 The team concludes, therefore, that the quality of student learning opportunities for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students **meets** UK expectations.

2.166 Given that Expectation B11 is not met and deemed to create a moderate risk, that there are six recommendations in or related to this Expectation (most of which reflect a weakness in the operation of part of the University's governance structure), that the University's recent actions suggest that it is slow to respond and so may not be fully aware of the significance of issues in this area, but that these issues are largely confined to some schools, the team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities for postgraduate research students **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

### **3 Judgement: Quality of the information produced about its provision**

**Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.**

#### **Quality Code, Part C: Information about higher education provision**

##### **Findings**

3.1 Overall responsibility for information governance lies with the Director of Planning and Governance. The Director of Marketing, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and the Head of Student Administration and Support take responsibility, respectively, for website information and information for prospective students; information for current students and academic quality information; and information for students on completion of their studies.

3.2 The University has clear and comprehensive schedules setting out information sign-off responsibilities at both institutional and school levels.

3.3 The University describes in its Publication Scheme the information it publishes or intends to publish.

3.4 The University's online presence is overseen by the Web Team in Marketing and Communications. They manage the main prospectus websites.

3.5 Programme specifications provide the definitive source of information published in prospectuses and on the website. The Head of Marketing uses programme specifications to develop information for publication. Before publication, information is checked at both institutional and school levels. For website information, checks are carried out at institutional and school/departmental levels by staff designated as 'moderators' for this particular purpose.

3.6 The designated moderators in schools and departments are responsible for information on school websites. This online information, together with school-generated printed information, is signed off at school level.

3.7 KIS data is collated centrally by the student records team, sent to schools for initial verification and additions, then checked a second time by schools following analysis and graphing undertaken centrally. The data is signed off by Deans and the Head of Finance before final sign-off by the Vice-Chancellor.

3.8 The Marketing and Communications department carried out a review of partner-published materials in September 2013. In the light of its recommendations, the University developed guidelines and requirements for the approval and monitoring of partners' marketing and communications materials. These guidelines and requirements are incorporated into the Guide to the Management of Higher Education with Partners. They require inspection and approval of all publicity materials by AQPO before publication. They also require Programme Coordinators to check published information during visits, raise any inaccuracies with the partner at the visit and report on fitness for purpose, accessibility and trustworthiness, using the Academic Partnerships Visit Report Form. Partnership Boards maintain oversight of the monitoring and accuracy of partners' published information.

- 3.9 The University has standard templates for programme specifications and programme and module handbooks.
- 3.10 Programme handbooks, including those for partner students, must be produced within the University's template, signed off by programme leaders and approved by School Boards. Module handbooks are signed off at programme level.
- 3.11 Programme Coordinators are required to liaise with partners in relation to the production of programme handbooks and to check that they comply with University expectations.
- 3.12 School Boards must approve updated and continuing programme specifications annually.
- 3.13 The University's processes for the production, checking, sign-off and monitoring of published information provide the clarity and robustness required to allow Expectation C to be met.
- 3.14 The review team scrutinised the University's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, in minutes of meetings, in monitoring reports and in meetings with staff, students and employers. The team also considered the fitness for purpose, accessibility and trustworthiness of information produced by the University through scrutiny of the University and school websites, programme specifications, student handbooks and academic quality documentation.
- 3.15 In accordance with its Publication Scheme, the University's externally accessible website contains a wide range of information and documentation. This includes its organisational structure; instruments of governance; Corporate Strategy: Making Knowledge Work 2016, incorporating its vision, aims and values; Learning and Teaching Strategy, incorporating the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan 2013-16; agendas and minutes from the governing body, Council, Senate and Academic Boards; minutes of Learning and Teaching Committee; the Academic Quality Handbook; information on student support services and other University services; and links to the UBU site.
- 3.16 The University's external website provides a list of partner institutions and their programmes. The type and category of collaborative activity are not listed on the site.
- 3.17 The University's publicly available information enables intended audiences to develop an understanding of the University's profile, values and quality and standards approaches and procedures.
- 3.18 The University provides extensive information for prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students through its website, the Undergraduate Prospectus, the Undergraduate Pocket Guide, the EU and International Prospectus and individual school undergraduate and course booklets. These sources set out clear information on courses, entry requirements and how to apply, as well as a wider range of information on matters such as life at the University, student finance, student support (including disability support), accommodation, and the city and its surroundings. The undergraduate online course pages provide direct links to the Unistats website.
- 3.19 Information for prospective students which is also published in printed form includes the University Undergraduate Prospectus and school course booklets.



3.20 Partner publicity material is submitted to AQPO for approval before publication. The Marketing and Communications department undertakes periodic audits of partner publicity materials.

3.21 There is evidence that Programme Coordinators check partner publicity materials during visits and report on findings, and that partner websites are checked periodically. Staff whom the review team met confirm that any inaccuracies are followed up to ensure that corrections are made. There is evidence of exercise of oversight of partner publicity materials by Partnership Boards, with reporting forward to the Academic Partnerships Subcommittee and thence to the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

3.22 The University provides publicity materials for its agents and agents are evaluated annually.

3.23 Students confirmed that the information they accessed as prospective students was accurate and helpful.

3.24 The team found one isolated example of lack of clarity of information published for prospective students, with respect to the MSc for Practitioners with a Special Interest. The University immediately revised the relevant promotional material to ensure that it was accurate.

3.25 Overall, the review team finds that information for prospective students is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.26 Programme specifications for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes published on the AQPO external website and viewed by the review team are presented within the University's template. They provide clear information on the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learner achievements of the programmes (including for embedded awards), together with other information including the curriculum, learning teaching and assessment strategies, hyperlinks to the University assessment regulations, learning resources and student support and guidance.

3.27 School Boards or School Learning and Teaching Committees approve updated and continuing programme specifications annually, including those for validated programmes at partner institutions.

3.28 All the programme specifications viewed by the team had been recently updated.

3.29 Students are directed to programme specifications via hyperlinks in programme handbooks, in accordance with the University's programme handbook template.

3.30 The University student handbook is an informative and user-friendly document providing information about the University, including rules and regulations, academic support, pastoral and welfare support, social activities and UBU.

3.31 Programme handbooks, which are set out in the University template, are also informative and user-friendly, with extensive information about the school, the programme (including hyperlinks to complaints and appeals processes), learning support, assessment (including hyperlinks to academic misconduct information) and programme monitoring and enhancement. The handbooks also provide hyperlinks to the Student Charter, which is readily accessible on the University website. Programme handbooks for students at collaborative partners follow the University template. Programme Coordinators check and report on partner programme handbooks during visits.

3.32 The team found one isolated example of a lack of clarity about assessment regulations in a programme handbook, but was able to verify that the relevant information in the associated programme specification was clear.

3.33 Students confirmed that they are provided with University, programme and module handbooks and that these are informative and useful documents.

3.34 On completion of their studies, students are provided with a certificate, where appropriate, and a transcript recording the programme, modules undertaken, location of delivery and achievement. The University is in the process of project planning and resourcing its Higher Education Achievement Record.

3.35 Overall, the review team finds that information for prospective, current students and students on completion of their studies is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.36 Staff of the University and its partners, external examiners, external experts, representatives of PSRBs, employers and other stakeholders have access to comprehensive quality assurance information through the Academic Quality Handbook. The handbook, which is accessible on the University's external website, is the main source of information in relation to the University's policies and procedures for the setting and maintenance of standards, quality assurance and enhancement. It is supplemented by additional information on the AQPO website and specific guides, including the Guide to the Management of Higher Education with Partners. The information provided is clear and detailed.

3.37 Staff training sessions and workshops provide further guidance to programme development teams and approval/review panel members and chairs.

3.38 Employers whom the review team met confirmed that they receive clear and helpful information about the University's requirements and expectations with regard to student placements.

3.39 Overall, the review team finds that information for those with responsibility for maintaining standards and assuring quality is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.40 The review team concludes that the information that the University provides for its intended audiences meets Expectation C. While there were minor inaccuracies requiring amendments to published information, overall the information provided for the public, staff, students, employers and other stakeholders is clear, comprehensive, fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The risk in this area is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## Quality of the information produced about its provision: Summary of findings

3.41 In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook. The team noted that the policies and procedures covering information are complete and comprehensive and carefully followed. The review team noted that students stated that the information they receive is complete and fit for purpose. There are no examples of good practice, recommendations or affirmations relating to this judgement area. The review team concludes that the quality of the information produced about its provision **meets** UK expectations.

## 4 Judgement: Enhancement of student learning opportunities

**Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.**

### Findings

4.1 The University has in place a Learning and Teaching Enhancement action plan. The plan has seven key themes: curriculum innovation; staff development and recruitment; developing students' academic, personal and professional skills; the learning environment; enhancing the quality of learning opportunities through partnership with students; technology-enhanced learning; and employability and enterprise. The plan includes actions to enhance the curriculum, which were being rolled out at the time of the review.

4.2 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme Board has oversight of all learning and teaching enhancement activity and projects. This then reports through to the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Learning and Teaching Committee oversees good practice-related activities. For example, plans are in place to implement an Organisation Development action plan, which is based on four themes: Culture and Vision, Leadership and Management Development, Performance Development Review and Impact Evaluation.

4.3 The Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching collates and reviews the PEPs (see Expectation B3 for information about PEPs) to write the SEPs, and also reviews the school-level NSS and KIS. The SEPs then are reported to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, which then reports to Senate. In semester two the SEPs go to the Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Subcommittee where recommendations are made for University-wide learning and teaching enhancement activity to the Learning and Teaching Committee and then Senate.

4.4 The Learning and Development Unit is the central student-facing academic skills advice and guidance service. It has plans in place next year to enhance the student experience of the service. Professional services are required to fill out a template showing how they are working towards achieving the University's strategic aims and objectives.

4.5 Students are provided with a wide range of support services to enhance their academic, professional and personal development. This includes working with employers to embed employability into the student experience. This is an example of good practice. See Expectation B4 for a fuller description.

4.6 A new initiative for the current academic year is the Vice-Chancellor Excellence Awards for outstanding teaching and support for learning. The award winners are expected to share their work via the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. There is a Performance Recognition scheme for all staff grades 1-10 and senior managers, which recognises staff for their noteworthy contributions in various different areas. Alongside these there are staff performance reviews. See Expectation B3 for more information about staff development.

4.7 Associate Deans Learning and Teaching and the Director of Postgraduate Research have responsibility for and make a significant contribution to the identification and dissemination of good practice at school level. This includes informing staff of changes in the University at school assemblies, leading on new innovations - for example 'Geek Week', where students are encouraged to participate in a competition to submit ideas for an app for Campus Life, Ecoversity, Employability and Study - and on working groups which lead on learning and teaching matters, for example e-marking.

4.8 Enhancement is shared through an Annual Learning and Teaching Conference, which is an opportunity to share and reflect on professional practice. There have been different themes each year, including Inspiring Student Engagement and Improving Student Attainment. Schools hold half days and training events for administration staff. The Pro Vice-Chancellor also holds open forums (see Expectation B3 for more information on this).

4.9 The University participated in a project with the HEA and the University of Kingston, 'Outduction', which looked at the final-year experience and developing employability skills, especially through study abroad and placements.

4.10 The University has in place processes to capture student feedback on modules (for further information see Expectation B3).

4.11 The University runs the NSS, Bradford Satisfaction Survey, PTES and PRES. The University looks at the survey data at an institutional level through the Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Subcommittee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Strategy and Performance Committee. The University has policies and strategies in place to ensure there is inclusivity in the curriculum. Equality and impact assessments are carried out at programme approval and re-approval. Students also have access to an Equal Opportunities Facilitator. Reviews and procedures are in place for accessibility onto campus for students. Reasonable adjustments are put in place for students on placement.

4.12 The deliberate steps that the University has in place to improve the quality of student learning opportunities allows the Enhancement Expectation to be met.

4.13 The team spoke to teaching staff, support staff, students and senior management. The University provided the team with evidence that included committee minutes, strategies, actions plans, examples of staff development and sharing good practice and examples of policies working in practice.

4.14 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan has recently been launched and is being monitored through the Learning and Teaching Committee. The committee receives reports from the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme Board.

4.15 The Associate Deans for the schools sit on the Learning and Teaching Committee and the information is then taken back to the schools; for example, Student Experience Surveys and the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee for monitoring action plans. Learning and Development have clear plans, but equally are aware of the challenges they have to take into consideration. See Expectation B3 for more information on the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plan.

4.16 The SEPs actions are monitored at School Learning and Teaching Committees. The minutes show that the SEPs are discussed at the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Quality Enhancement and Academic Audit Committee looks at institutional themes from the PEPs and SEPs and reports them to the Learning and Teaching Committee. There are examples of where an individual PEP highlighted an area of good practice, which has now been implemented further and provided with further resourcing in the curriculum, and a conference has been held to share the practice in the sector.

4.17 Employers were very complimentary about the Careers Development Service. Students were equally satisfied with the support they receive on placement and that there are placement link tutors in place, though sometimes the level of support could depend on the member of staff. Some employers have had support from the University to put in place a structure to allow an internship or placement to develop. The employers have worked with the University and given feedback and asked to give feedback on areas that could improve, for example covering letters and timing of placements. Through this the employers have

seen an improvement. Some employers have worked with departments on assessments and projects to help create a 'real-life' experience. Through this the employers were supported throughout. The institutional commitment to working with regional employers to embed employability in the undergraduate and PGT student experience is an example of good practice as detailed under Expectation B4.

4.18 Staff show awareness of the new Vice-Chancellors Excellence Awards and are aware of the winners and why they had won; for example, the team who had created the plagiarism online course for students. One member of staff who won an award has been seconded into the enhancement team. See Expectation B3 for further information on staff development effectiveness.

4.19 There is a range of activity happening to share information and good practice through school assemblies, lunchtime workshops, school half days and training events for administration staff. One department also brought students together to celebrate student success and review the programme. This led to a report of the student feedback being created to help discussion at a staff meeting.

4.20 It is clear from the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference website that there are lots of different themes being discussed. Senior staff stated the conference was in collaboration with students and that it was a good place to share good practice. The Learning and Teaching Forum meet regularly and lots of good practice is shared through this.

4.21 Evidence shows examples of where Associate Deans Learning and Teaching have taken initiatives forward. This includes the 'Geek Week', which looked at enhancing the Bradford University App. Students were complimentary of the app.

4.22 It is clear from the Employability Strategy, the action plan and meeting with employers that the research work carried out on 'Outduction' with the HEA has been implemented by the University and has resulted in increases in student internships and placements.

4.23 There are some 'you said, we did' examples on the student survey website, and on a presentation that staff can show students on the NSS, which shows what has been improved. The PEPs and SEPs clearly show how the programmes and schools are taking on board survey feedback and the actions being taken. See Expectation B3 for further information on PEPs and SEPs.

4.24 Evidence shows discussions of survey data at the Quality and Enhancement Audit Subcommittee and Academic Strategic Performance Committee. Staff-Student Liaison Committee minutes are also discussed at the School Learning and Teaching Committee.

4.25 In the self-evaluation, UBU expressed concerns about the timescales involved in the provision of feedback to students. The University is aware of student concerns on the consistency and timeliness of feedback across schools and has been actively tackling the problem by requiring programme teams to develop and publish clear strategies for summative and formative feedback; and by defined University-wide timescales for the provision of feedback which were approved by the University Learning and Teaching Committee and embedded in the Student Charter. The review team has affirmed the actions being taken and more details are given under Expectation B6.

4.26 The University has a comprehensive Equality and Diversity Strategy and Dignity and Respect Policy. Equality, diversity and inclusivity are embedded in the Student Charter and the Curriculum Framework. Staff state that the Curriculum Framework gave them an opportunity to engage in inclusivity in the curriculum. The Learning and Teaching

Enhancement Plan theme four has actions in place to enhance the student experience and to help support academic, professional and personal skills. Programme teams comment in the PEPs on any areas on issues raised relating to protected groups and how they have responded to them; these are then summarised in the SEPs.

4.27 Programme approvals and re-approvals have detailed Equality Impact Assessments completed. Each periodic review completes a critical appraisal, and as part of the appraisal, programmes answer how they are effectively engaging all students in learning and what they have in place to monitor the levels of engagement. When talking to different groups of staff and students a common theme that emerged about the positive aspect of the University was the diversity of their students and the inclusivity.

4.28 The University reviewed the access and orientation on the campus with disabled students and staff to get an idea of what needs to be improved. An Accessible Estates Steering Group is in place to review and update the audit and to promote inclusion of disabled people and disability issues with regards to all areas of the University estate. The Equality and Diversity Committee reports to the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee.

4.29 Students are given initial screening tests when they start. This allows students to be given the opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes equally. This is then followed up with a further questionnaire to assess their needs. Students are positive about the experience. Students are also provided with reasonable adjustment for placements to allow them to be able to access and participate in the placement. Students and employers are positive about this as a smooth experience for both parties. The team concludes that the institutional approach and commitment to diversity and inclusivity in the curriculum and the wider student experience is **good practice**.

4.30 The review team concludes from the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and students that the Enhancement Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## Enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.31 In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook. The team noted that the University has a number of policies and procedures for the enhancement of student learning opportunities and these are embedded across the provision. There is one example of good practice relating to the institutional commitment to diversity and inclusivity, no recommendations and no affirmations relating to this judgement area. The review team noted that the good practice in Expectation B4 and the affirmation in Expectation B6 also related to this judgement area. The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.



## 5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

### Findings

5.1 Student employability is a longstanding strength of the University of Bradford. Its corporate strategy is titled 'Making Knowledge Work'; the Vice-Chancellor describes the University as the 'technology university of the North'. Its DLHE results are typically strong, albeit somewhat uneven on account of the mix of vocational and non-vocational programmes. It estimates that approximately 70 per cent of programmes have PSRB accreditation.

5.2 The University has an Employability Strategy covering the years 2012-15. Its implementation is outlined in an accompanying action plan, and is overseen by an Employability Steering Group. In practical terms, much of the work is done by the Careers Development Service. The review team saw evidence that the Careers Development Service is well regarded by students.

5.3 The University is highly integrated into the regional economy. Schools have advisory boards that represent a range of different stakeholders including employers, placement providers and voluntary sector representatives. The review team met a range of employers, who spoke positively about the University's commitment and its responsiveness to their interests. These employers ranged from very small companies, for which a student intern can make a material difference, through to regional NHS trusts, which are closely integrated into the University's work.

5.4 Employers assume a range of different roles in the delivery and development of the curriculum. In many programmes, especially those facing the NHS, a significant proportion of the students' training and assessment takes place in the workplace. To facilitate these arrangements, some staff hold joint appointments with the University and the NHS. Other programmes are developed on a relatively small scale to meet needs identified by employers.

5.5 Placements are prioritised across the University, included in programmes 'wherever possible'. The Careers Development Service has used the addition of two full-time staff to focus on increasing placement opportunities both inside and outside the University. Management patterns differ depending upon the programme, but generally appear robust. Given that the majority of the University's links with employers are regional, most collaborative provision programmes are not so well served in practice, although they have equal access to the Careers Development Service.

5.6 In addition to placement activity, the University has developed a number of innovative approaches to promoting employability. 'Build My Career' is a virtual career centre, providing a CV builder, an interview simulator, and career management tools. The Careers Development Services runs an extracurricular Summer Experience Programme, providing six-week placements for approximately 40 undergraduates per year. The Bradford Graduate Internships Programme provides internships of three months' duration, most of which are external to the University. The Bradford Graduate Tier 1 Entrepreneurship Scheme is an innovative response to recent changes to laws regarding student visas. Through this scheme, the University sponsors selected students who demonstrate entrepreneurial potential to progress onto a 12-month programme of business support following the successful completion of their studies. The Bradford Mentoring Programme brings individual students into contact with career mentors from industry and professional services.

5.7 The approach to employability, however, tends to prioritise undergraduate and PGT students. The review team identified less systematic commitment to employability for postgraduate research students.

5.8 Overall, the review team endorsed the University's claims that student employability represents a strength in its provision, and acknowledged its successful integration within the regional economy.

## Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 27 to 29 of the [Higher Education Review handbook](#).

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality).

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary).

### Academic standards

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

### Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

### Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

### Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

### Degree-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).

### Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'. See also **blended learning**.

### Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

### e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

### **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 our review processes.

### **Expectations**

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

### **Flexible and distributed learning**

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

### **Framework**

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

### **Framework for higher education qualifications**

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

### **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 audit and review processes.

### **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.

### **Multiple awards**

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

### **Operational definition**

A formal definition of a term, establishing 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.

### **Public information**

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

### **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.

### **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.

### **Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)**

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

### **Threshold academic standard**

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** and **subject benchmark statements**.

### **Virtual learning environment (VLE)**

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

### **Widening participation**

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

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