



# Higher Education Review of University of Hull

November 2015

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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 Hull. The review took place from 24 to 27 November 2015 and was conducted by a team of six reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Ruth Ayres
- Professor John Baldock
- Ms Barbara Colledge
- Ms Sally Powell
- Professor Gary Wood
- Mr Martynas Serys-Kubertavicius (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by the University of Hull 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](#) (the 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 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 Hull 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 2015-16 are Student Employability and Digital Literacy,<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=2859](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859).

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

<sup>4</sup> Higher Education Review web pages:  
[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 Hull

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

- The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of the awards **meet UK expectations.**
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets UK expectations.**
- The quality of the provider's information about learning opportunities **meets UK expectations.**
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **is commended.**

### Good practice

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

- The design, development and approval of programmes within the Curriculum 2016+ project which has enhanced the embedding of employability into the curriculum and created new approaches to learning and teaching (Expectation B1).
- The contribution of the library development project to enhancement of the learning support for students (Expectation B3).
- The strategic transformational approach to cross institutional enhancement, which involves effective partnership working between professional support and academic teams through a series of integrated projects (Enhancement).

### Recommendations

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

By May 2016:

- ensure that all information available to students about the period for lodging academic appeals is accurate and consistent (Expectation B9).

By September 2016:

- ensure that all information available to students about the timescales for return of assessed work with feedback is accurate and consistent (Expectation B6).

### Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that the University of Hull is already taking to improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The steps taken to further engage students in the Quality Enhancement Report (QER) process (Expectation B8).

## Theme: Student Employability

The University of Hull (the University) has a strategic focus on student employability. This is evident in both its Student Employability Strategy and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy. There is clarity of purpose in the intentions of the University to build upon and extend links with employers and alumni. These are complemented by increasing work-related opportunities, internships, work placements and voluntary opportunities. In addition, the University is developing the enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability skills of its students.

In 2013-14 the University's enhancement theme was student employability and this was informed by its Curriculum 2016+ project. All programmes are required to embed the Hull Graduate Attributes and employability in both the core curriculum and in specialist, professionally based modules.

The University's strategy for student employability is supported by a range of teams and initiatives that include a dedicated Careers and Employability Service, a Skills Team that helps students to develop their graduate skills, and the recently established online mentoring scheme, launched in 2013-14. These initiatives and others are considered in more detail at the end of this review report.

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 Hull

The University of Hull was founded in 1927 to provide education to its region. It was granted a Royal Charter in 1954 with a purpose and mission to advance education, scholarship, knowledge and understanding by teaching and research, for the benefit of individuals and society at large. It is the fourteenth oldest University in England and seeks to blend the traditional with the innovative. In 2014-15 it had a turnover of around £180m, more than 17,500 students, of whom around 1,500 were international, and approximately 2,350 full-time equivalent staff.

The University is led by its Vice-Chancellor who was appointed in September 2009. The Executive comprises the Vice-Chancellor, three Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary, the Chief Finance Officer and the Human Resources Director.

The University's academic provision is arranged across six faculties: the Faculty of Science and Engineering; the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; the Faculty of Education; the Faculty of Health and Social Care; Hull University Business School; and the Hull York Medical School (jointly with the University of York).

The University's Strategic Plan (2011-15) and its successor Strategic Plan (2016-20) emphasise investment in people, academic endeavour, the student experience, estates, facilities and infrastructure and the University's ability to grow and diversify. At the time of the review visit the University was finalising the next phase of its strategy to steer the institution through the period to 2020.

Four institutional strategic change programmes were developed from the Strategic Plan (2011-15), and also informed by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy (2012-15). Together, they comprise the University's Transformation Programme. They are:

- the IT Transformation Journey to improve information systems and services, and introduce innovative ICT solutions
- the Academic Investment Initiative to shape the University's academic staff profile, with an emphasis on supporting staff to develop their research and teaching
- Curriculum 2016+, which is a project to reshape the University's programme portfolio through whole-institution curriculum reform and step-change in the use of learning technologies
- the Student Experience Programme, which is designed to place students at the heart of the University, taking a student journey approach in order to improve the quality and scope of student support, from applicant to alumnus.

The University's Council receives reports on the progress of the strategic aims and priorities, which are informed by key performance indicators based on sector benchmarking of institutional data.

Recent changes at the University include:

- a major refurbishment of the Brynmor Jones Library
- the inauguration of a new Allam Building for biomedical research
- comprehensive refurbishments at the Scarborough Campus, including improvements to the library, teaching spaces, laboratories, residences, sports facilities and ICT
- investment in ICT infrastructure, including a network architecture, and a new high performance wireless network, that provides fast broadband connectivity to campuses and student residences.

It is the University's intention that the Strategic Plan (2016-20) will build on the momentum of the previous Strategic Plan (2011-15) with a more integrated approach to change initiatives, focusing on process change as well as change management and leadership.

The University's approach to collaborative provision in the United Kingdom is regionally focused and its intention is to remain an anchor institution for its region. The college-based higher education strategic arrangements involve eight regional further education college partners, comprising the University of Hull Federation of Colleges. All of these partnerships involve the University validating the provision of its partners, typically delivered at one of the partner colleges, but also including a small number of programmes that are validated for provision on a consortium basis within the Federation.

In addition the University has a limited number of EU-based collaborative partnerships. They include a validated postgraduate diploma delivered in the Republic of Ireland and two dual awards offered with University partners in France and Germany. The University also has a range of exchange arrangements with European partner institutions, including through the Erasmus programme.

The University has an arrangement for the delivery of programmes using a blend of distance teaching and franchised models with a partner in Hong Kong, and more recently it has begun delivery of a programme within a similar model in Singapore. The University also delivers programmes on a distance basis at a small number of partner institutions and agencies in South East Asia, the Middle East and, recently, Eastern Europe.

In 2014, the University decided to pursue a new model for the delivery of provision on its Scarborough Campus. The University will continue to teach its own students on the Scarborough campus until summer 2017, when the 2014 intake will graduate. A transition process is in place to transfer the delivery of subsequent intakes of selected Scarborough

programmes for delivery through a validation partnership and the first intake of students under this model will commence in September 2015.

The Hull York Medical School was established in 2002 and is a significant strategic partnership for the University. In 2012 it absorbed some of the activities of the former Hull Postgraduate Medical Institute which extended its range of postgraduate provision, with other activities being transferred to the Faculty of Science and Engineering and the Faculty of Health and Social Care.

The University has recently entered into an agreement with Cambridge Education Group to establish a pathway College for the matriculation of international students to University programmes in Business and Engineering. The first cohort of students is planned for January 2016 with progression to the University in September 2016.

An audit team from QAA carried out an Institutional Audit of the University of Hull in April 2009. In addition, there was a further audit of the University's collaborative provision in March 2011.

The Institutional Audit of April 2009 identified features of good practice and made advisable and desirable recommendations.

The review team found that the University has continued, and in some cases expanded, the features of good practice and that these have been incorporated into policies and procedures to ensure greater consistency and applicability throughout the institution.

With regard to the advisable recommendations, the review team found that the introduction by the University of a revised process for postgraduate student progress has provided better monitoring of postgraduate students and better training and updating of supervisors. In addition, the range of information used by the University to assure itself of the standards and quality of research degree programmes has been extended. Information is now provided on four-year and seven-year submissions with annual reporting of appeals and complaints.

In response to the first desirable recommendation, feedback received from students via module evaluation questionnaires and staff-student committees is shared with students via uploads on the University's virtual learning environment (VLE) and through the inclusion in student handbooks of changes made in response to feedback from students in the previous year's cohort.

The recommendation on postgraduate students who teach has been addressed with compulsory training in place for those new to teaching. In addition, the recommendation on external examiner reports has been addressed through an institutional requirement for reports and responses to be shared at staff-student committees. In addition, the University is making the reports available on its VLE.

The review team concludes that the University has responded effectively to the recommendations made in the 2009 Audit. There remains some work in progress, for example student engagement, but there is evidence of planned development. The University has demonstrated a proactive approach to future education and quality management. There is demonstrable awareness of national developments and an enthusiasm to drive forward with pedagogic development. The management of Quality and Standards, and incorporation of action planning for enhancement, is particularly strong.

A subsequent Audit of collaborative provision at the University was carried out by a team of auditors from QAA from 14 March to 18 March 2011. The purpose of this Audit was to provide public information on the quality of the learning opportunities available to students

and on the academic standards of the awards that the University offers through collaborative arrangements.

In response to the good practice identified during this Audit, the review team found that the role of the academic contacts and consultants has continued to be effective and has proved to be especially helpful in the context of the University's Quality and Standards Framework. Likewise, the University Code of Practice: Production of Student Handbooks has continued to provide clarity for students and is reviewed regularly. In meetings with the review team, students confirmed that their expectations of the course had been met.

With regard to the three advisory recommendations, the University has made changes in its approval process to bring about the necessary consistency for awards. It is also making systematic use of management information through, for example, Partner Quality Enhancement Reports (PQERs), has improved its oversight, and has introduced greater timeliness to issues and actions raised through monitoring processes.

The University has responded to the two desirable recommendations through changed procedures and tighter controls for recognised teacher status, and also revised its processes and checks on the accuracy of marketing information prior to their publication.

The review team concludes that the University has, guided by an action plan, effectively responded to the advisory and desirable recommendations in the 2011 Audit of collaborative provision.

## Explanation of the findings about the University of Hull

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: The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards

**Expectation (A1):** In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

**a) ensure that the requirements of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are met by:**

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

**b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics**

**c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework**

**d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards**

## Findings

1.1 The University has regulations and processes in place that ensure that the qualifications it awards internally and at partner institutions are at the appropriate level of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). In addition, its programme regulations and processes are appropriately designed to ensure that the outcomes of programmes are matched to qualification descriptors in the FHEQ and that outcomes are mapped to Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.2 The naming of qualifications awarded by the University is in line with the titling conventions specified in the FHEQ and qualifications awarded take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics.

1.3 The University considers and makes use of Subject Benchmark Statements in the design, approval and review of programmes and awards. Credit awarded (volume and level) is aligned to *The Higher Education Credit Framework for England* and *The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*.

1.4 The University's procedures and processes demonstrate that it positions its qualifications at the appropriate level of the FHEQ.

1.5 The qualifications offered by the University are described in full and are accessible to the public via the University's website programme and module catalogue. The programme descriptors ensure that the titling conventions of the Quality Code are respected and contain detailed learning outcomes that align with, and take account of, the relevant qualification descriptors in the FHEQ.

1.6 The University ensures full alignment of its programmes to the credit designations of the FHEQ. In addition, subject benchmarking statements inform curriculum design, approval and review and are referenced in programme specifications.

1.7 The Expectation was tested through the consideration of documentary evidence. The understanding and application of the documentation was tested during the review visit through meetings with staff and students.

1.8 The review team found that the processes in place work well and are regularly monitored and reviewed, with Curriculum 2016+ and other initiatives providing a key vehicle for ensuring that the expectations of the Quality Code are met.

1.9 The team concludes that the Expectation is met, as the documented processes and procedures are effective in ensuring that a robust system is in place and that the University follows its procedures consistently and ubiquitously. The level of associated risk is low.

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

**Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards**

**Findings**

1.10 The authority and responsibility for setting and maintaining academic standards is clearly defined as being that of the University Senate under the delegated authority of the University Council. The operational responsibility for taught programmes and research awards is delegated to the University Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee (ULTAC) and the University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC).

1.11 The three subcommittees of ULTAC, the Student Progress Committee, the Programme Approvals Committee, and the Regulations, Codes and Processes Committee, oversee the award of credit and degrees, the approval of new taught programmes and the development and maintenance of academic regulations and codes of practice respectively. The sub-committee of UREC has a similar responsibility for research degrees.

1.12 The University has a clearly defined and transparent academic framework, which sets out the requirements, characteristics, and definitions of volume and level of credit for both taught programmes and research degrees.

1.13 The University's code of practice on assessment procedures details matters relating to assessment and applies to both on-campus and collaborative provision. Regulations clearly articulate the limits of admission with advanced standing and the recognition of prior learning in relation to the award of qualifications.

1.14 The University has a robust academic framework governed by a set of comprehensive and transparent regulations and codes of practice. They govern the award of all academic credit and qualifications of the University and apply equally irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them.

1.15 The review team tested the Expectation through the documentary evidence provided by the University and by examining information available on the University's website. The review team met staff, students and employers and tested their understanding of the academic framework and its application in practice both by the University and by partner providers of the University's awards.

1.16 The University's academic framework is effective in securing academic standards. The framework with its processes and codes of practice is well established, communicated well, understood and applied consistently by staff and students.

1.17 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of associated risk is low, as the evidence examined through documentation and discussions with stakeholders confirmed that the academic framework in place is robust, comprehensive and transparent.

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

**Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards**

**Findings**

1.18 The University maintains a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they award, both on campus and with their collaborative provision. The programme and module specifications are held centrally in the Programme and Module Catalogue. The University's Academic Information system (AIS) is the definitive repository for all programme documentation including programme specifications. These are published online in the Programme and Module Catalogue.

1.19 Taught programme and module specifications are well documented using a standard template. There are clearly stated learning outcomes, skills and attributes for each programme and each component module. The level, volume, credit values, content and assessment methods for each module are recorded and are easily accessible to staff, students and the public via the website.

1.20 Additional information provided on the programme specifications includes reference to indicators of quality and standards, particularly support for learning and methods of evaluating and improving quality of learning.

1.21 The review team tested the Expectation through the examination of the documentation provided as evidence for the review, by accessing the University's website, and in meetings with staff and students.

1.22 The regulations and processes in place demonstrate that appropriate national academic standards are set and maintained and that consideration is given to the Quality Code and the FHEQ. The authority and responsibility for the maintenance of these records and for making any changes and revisions to them is clearly defined and accurately executed.

1.23 The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

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

**Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.24 The University's Programme Regulations are approved by Senate and articulate the requirements for each University award, including collaborative provision. The University's ULTAC makes recommendations to Senate in respect of taught degrees and the Research and Enterprise Committee in respect of research awards. ULTAC and its Regulations, Codes and Processes subcommittee (RCPC) are responsible for maintaining the regulations and codes and for their alignment and mapping to the FHEQ, the Quality Code and other external reference points, including professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements. Codes of practice are reviewed regularly, at least at five-yearly intervals.

1.25 ULTAC delegates its powers for considering approvals to the Programme Approvals Committee (PAC). Only limited exemptions from the academic framework (concerning use of modules and electives) may be granted by PAC. The University is currently nearing completion of an extensive curriculum reform initiative - Curriculum 2016+ - as part of its planned institutional strategic change programme. Detailed guidance for validation and approvals is provided, including the Curriculum 2016+ Validation Handbook and the Code of Practice: Approval of Programmes and Modules.

1.26 Approval of programmes is a two-stage process further described in Section B1. Faculties lead on initial scrutiny of proposals, which proceeds to a Development Consent Panel including representation from the central Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice Directorate (LEAP) and Strategic Development Unit (SDU). Stage two involves consideration by a University Validation Panel (UVP), which makes recommendations to PAC. Membership of UVPs includes external advisers and student representatives.

1.27 The University has in place a comprehensive range of regulations, policies and codes of practice to assure academic standards that meet the UK threshold standards. The central LEAP Directorate provides a resource for departments and faculties seeking to design and develop programmes. An appropriate committee structure is in place to allow full discussion of proposals and for deliberative decisions to be effectively undertaken and appropriate recommendations made.

1.28 A full range of guidance materials, including an approvals checklist and programme specification templates, help to ensure that a consistent and thorough approach to the assurance of standards is maintained. Information and support is clear and readily available to staff and other stakeholders.

1.29 The review team considered the University's own account of its arrangements for the approval of programmes and reviewed the structure, composition and record of relevant committees. It also sampled records of validation events including those of collaborative provision. In meetings with staff, the team discussed aspects of the design and approval process, specifically the Curriculum 2016+ project, and how this had been implemented and supported. Employers and students were asked about their involvement in programme development.

1.30 In its self-evaluation document, submitted as part of this review, the University recognised the opportunity afforded by the Curriculum 2016+ initiative to review the effectiveness of its processes for programme design, development and approval. During the review, the team found evidence that policies and procedures were well understood and that they were fit for purpose, approximately 70 per cent of provision having been successfully revalidated since the initiative began. A number of teaching staff whom the review team met spoke of their positive experiences in programme re-design, and their appreciation of the challenge of implementing Curriculum 2016+. Senior staff noted how processes had been streamlined to manage the high volume of validation and approvals work more effectively. Staff from LEAP gave an account of their role in working with faculties and departments to facilitate successful programme development. The review team noted the significant amount of consultation with students and their direct involvement as validation panel members. Although validation and approval processes are specifically defined in documentation, the review team was informed that flexibility may be agreed where there are individual requirements of programmes, for example where professional and statutory bodies are involved.

1.31 The University has assembled a robust set of regulations, policies and codes of practice that effectively support the design, development and approval of awards. Arrangements for planning and development are consistent and contribute to the maintenance of standards and the achievement of the strategic aims of the Curriculum 2016+ project. The oversight of senior committees and the support of LEAP helps to ensure the maintenance of standards during continuing change.

1.32 Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

**Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:**

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.33 The Senate has overall responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards, programmes and awards. It delegates authority to ULTAC, the Regulations Codes and Processes Committee (RCPC), and PAC.

1.34 The University's Quality Handbook includes the University's Programme Regulations, which contain the relevant regulations, codes of practice, guidance, and templates. These provide detailed expectations for programme design, approval, review and assessment procedures. They are fully aligned to UK threshold standards, for example by describing how module marks lead to relevant degree classification or outline standards and criteria for the award.

1.35 The assessment procedures complement the codes of Practice for Boards of Examiners and external examining. The Code of Practice: Boards of Examiners informs the agenda of Module and Programme Boards, which take into account progression decisions. External examiners verify the standards for the awards and take into account any additional requirements set by PSRBs (See Expectation A3.4). External examiners are also external reference points as part of their duties, and, for example, provide commentaries about opportunities for enhancement.

1.36 The University operates a two-tier Board of Examiners. Module Boards verify module marks awarded to candidates for summative assessment tasks, while Programme Boards verify progression between programme stages and the classification of awards.

1.37 Generic grading descriptors are specific to study level, aligned to external references and used across the University. They describe grading band criteria based on general assessed work characteristics. A numeric 100-point scale is used to grade assessments with clearly articulated generic grading descriptors for Levels 3-7.

1.38 Module marks are weighted, according to their credit value, to produce stage-weighted averages that determine progression according to the relevant University Programme Regulations. Stage averages are then weighted, as per the approved programme specification, to determine classification under the terms of the relevant University Programme Regulations.

1.39 Assessment criteria are published in module and programme specifications, providing a link between learning outcomes and the grading descriptors.

1.40 Under the Curriculum 2016+ Programme, the University has redeveloped its approach to programme development including curriculum design and assessment. Programme validation now requires externality on University Validation Panels and

assessment is designed taking into account the key learning thresholds (See Expectation 3.4).

1.41 The review team examined documentation relating to the University's programme regulations, including codes of practice, examples of programme specifications and minutes of ULTAC and PAC meetings. The clear responsibility chain and well documented processes assure the review team that these are comprehensive.

1.42 The review team explored the understanding around the academic standards and learning outcomes, and their functionality at the University, with both staff and students. Staff are aware of the processes in place to ensure academic standards and their role in the University's programme regulations, as well as the developments brought by the Curriculum 2016+ Programme. Students whom the review team met demonstrated an understanding of the academic requirements to progress throughout their studies and how they tie in with the learning outcomes.

1.43 The review team concludes that the University has in place suitable controls to ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded appropriately and in accordance with internal and UK threshold academic standards. The Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

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



**Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.**

**Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards***

**Findings**

1.44 The University operates subject-based periodic review on a six-year cycle, covering undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes in a given area. The focus of periodic review is on management of programme delivery, enhancement of the quality of provision, and how standards are secured. A new code of practice for PSRBs was introduced in 2014 to ensure that PSRB requirements are also met within periodic review activity.

1.45 The schedule for Periodic Review is managed by ULTAC. Required documentation includes data on admissions, progression and achievement plus an evaluative commentary as to how data is used to inform student support and other strategies. The annual monitoring process, preceded by module evaluation, and together with any validation activity, feeds into periodic review (see Section B8).

1.46 There is external representation on review panels, typically one or more academics from another higher education provider, a stakeholder, and an independent student. The University intends to further involve students in its monitoring and review processes and is working closely with student representatives and the Students' Union (HUU) to facilitate this. Training is provided for periodic review staff and student panel members.

1.47 Periodic review reports and action plans are submitted to ULTAC. It prepares an overview of strengths and good practice as part of its role in monitoring and review of Quality Enhancement.

1.48 The Schedule and requirements for periodic review are clearly set out in the University's Quality Handbook. As well as providing a means for checking the appropriateness of standards, periodic review forms an important part of processes for quality enhancement, the outcomes being incorporated into Faculty Quality Enhancement Reports.

1.49 Student feedback, external examiner feedback, and student performance data are provided to enable panels to consider the validity and relevance of programmes. A view of the quality and standards of subject areas is achieved through benchmarking of learning outcomes with the FHEQ and other external reference points, and by the inclusion of external members in the review panels.

1.50 The review team examined documentation, including University regulations and codes of practice, relating to programme monitoring and review, and considered case study examples of monitoring and review activity as well as examples of Quality Enhancement Reports. In their meetings with staff and students, the team asked for their account of involvement in monitoring and review, and in quality enhancement, including quality enhancement reporting. The team also met senior staff with whom they discussed strategic plans to reform the curriculum and enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

1.51 Periodic review is a clearly defined process that staff consider forms an important part of the University's management of quality and standards. As part of its Strategic Plan the University created a Transformation Programme, which will include a major curriculum review, thereby demonstrating a commitment to continuing improvement of its provision. Staff whom the team met explained how students and their future employability were at the heart of this curriculum review.

1.52 Staff also shared with the review team their engagement in a range of monitoring and review activities and described how these contributed to the ongoing Quality Enhancement Report process. This is a well established faculty-based annual activity that both links to, and is informed by, periodic review and annual programme review, forming the foundation of enhancement activity in the University. LEAP provides support to faculties in monitoring, review and enhancement activities.

1.53 The review team concludes that the University has effective mechanisms in place for the monitoring and review of programmes, which assess the achievement and maintenance of academic standards. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

**Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:**

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.54 The University has well structured mechanisms and principles, which secure the place of externality in the maintenance of academic standards. The Code of Practice: Ensuring Validity and Relevance outlines the responsibilities and review processes in place to ensure continued alignment with relevant external reference points. Furthermore, this code of practice has clear definitions and requirements for what the University considers independent externality.

1.55 The University uses three external points in both the development and approval stages of new programmes: external advice on recruitment potential and programme sustainability; an external examiner to provide commentary during the programme development process; and independent academic input on the comparability and appropriateness of academic standards of the programme.

1.56 The two-stage process provides a checkpoint mechanism, ensuring that appropriate standards are maintained within the institution while providing scope for innovation in programme development. Full Approval considers the detailed academic content of the proposed programme and is the responsibility of the UVPs. Subsequently, UVPs provide recommendations to PAC, which actions the outcomes.

1.57 As part of the Curriculum 2016+ programme, Development Consent Panels (DCPs), assembled for the first stage of the programme approval process, include academic representation from different faculties as well as members from SDU and LEAP. UVPs also include external independent academics as full members of the panel.

1.58 Both DCPs and UVPs are independent of the faculty submitting the proposal and include student members. All UVP panel members are provided with appropriate training and are extensively informed about the purpose and scope of validation. Briefing notes on curriculum design and University procedures for programme development consent and validation are available as additional resources.

1.59 The University applies Annual Monitoring of Programmes (AMP), Quality Enhancement Reports and Periodic Reviews as the main mechanisms for monitoring academic standards. Annual Monitoring Reports are required for all taught provision, including collaborative provision. The process begins with critical reflection at module level, which informs the annual monitoring of programmes and culminates in the Quality Enhancement Reports. These include external examiner response grids, are produced annually by each faculty and its constituent departments, and demonstrate how the quality of the programmes has been assured and standards maintained. (See Expectation B8). The panels that consider these reports include two members of staff from other faculties.

1.60 Periodic reviews are undertaken by Review Panels and focus on the management of academic standards of awards and the quality of provision. These panels include at least

three external members: an academic from another higher education institution, a stakeholder and an independent student. External examiner reports feed into the periodic review evidence base. Training and support information regarding the purpose of the review and University procedures is provided for panel members. The schedule for Periodic Reviews is informed by the review requirements of PSRBs. The University also applies a code of practice covering the monitoring process requirements of PSRBs.

1.61 The external examiner procedures include systematic reporting using standardised forms. These provide for comments on the appropriateness and comparability of a programme's academic standards and associated risks. (See Expectation B7). The reports are examined by LEAP and distributed to relevant Faculty Managers for actioning. LEAP also sends a detailed analysis of external examiner responses to ULTAC, for the consideration of University-level issues.

1.62 The University has a well documented and efficient approach to ensuring that external and independent advice is provided at key stages of programme development, monitoring and validation. The associated information is clear and accessible, and includes comprehensive guidance where necessary.

1.63 The review team examined documentation relating to the University's Programme Regulations. The review team confirmed the application of the processes for ensuring external and independent expertise in meetings with academic staff and with the evidence submitted by the University.

1.64 The review team concludes that appropriate systems are in place for the provision of external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

## The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards: Summary of findings

1.65 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.66 There are seven Expectations in this area and all are met with a low level of risk.

1.67 The University has regulations and processes that ensure the qualifications it awards internally, and at partner institutions, are at the appropriate level of the FHEQ. Its programme regulations and processes also ensure programmes are matched to qualification descriptors in the FHEQ and that outcomes are mapped to Subject Benchmark Statements. In addition, the University's academic framework is effective in securing standards and the associated processes and codes of practice are effectively communicated, well established and applied consistently.

1.68 A definitive record of each programme and qualification awarded internally and in collaborative provision is maintained by the University. The taught programme and module specifications are well documented.

1.69 There is a comprehensive range of regulations, policies and codes of practice to ensure that the University's academic standards meet the UK threshold standards. These effectively support the design, development and approval of awards. Arrangements for planning and development are consistent and contribute to the maintenance of standards and the achievement of the strategic aims.

1.70 The University undertakes a subject-based six-year cycle of periodic review of its programmes. The process is clearly defined and is an important part of the management of academic quality and standards. There are also effective processes and procedures to secure externality in the development and maintenance of academic programmes. These are supported by clear, accessible and comprehensive guidance.

1.71 The review team concludes that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of the awards meets UK expectations.

## 2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

**Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval**

#### **Findings**

2.1 The overriding academic authority for the approval of new programmes lies with the University's Senate, delegated via ULTAC to PAC. The Senate retains the power to approve new awards of the University, normally on the advice of PAC via ULTAC.

2.2 There are two stages leading to programme approval, which are preceded by the planning cycle involving annual review of academic portfolio provision.

2.3 Stage One aims to ensure appropriate physical, human and learning resources are available, and reviews the portfolio of provision as set out in the Faculty Planning Statement. A Development Consent Panel is convened to consider the academic, recruitment and business case for the programme. The Panel includes a member from the University Strategic Development Unit (SDU) and a member from the LEAP Directorate. There is also representation from different faculties and consideration of an external view of likely viability and sustainability.

2.4 In Stage Two a UVP undertakes a detailed scrutiny, checking adherence to Regulations and the Validation Handbook. Recommendations are made to PAC for final approval, and reported to ULTAC and Senate.

2.5 As well as determining approval, or otherwise, for new programmes, PAC may consider major amendments to existing programmes, or programme withdrawal requiring a management plan, to safeguard standards. Acting on the recommendations of UVPs, PAC may approve or defer decisions pending further information, or reject proposals.

2.6 Where relevant, consultation about new programme developments is carried out in parallel with the associated professional body. A new UCP (University Code of Practice) for Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies has recently been developed to guide this process. In addition, students are extensively involved in consultation regarding programme development and are involved as panel members at both stages of approval.

2.7 The central LEAP Directorate provides support and guidance to programme development teams regarding pedagogy, threshold concepts, graduate attributes and Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment (TESTA) assessment principles. In addition, training for panel members is provided.

2.8 The University's Code of Practice: Approval of Programmes and Modules provides standard forms, checklists and information on requirements for new programmes. Briefing notes on curriculum design, handbooks for Stages One and Two and other guidance materials are also made available to staff, students and external stakeholders involved in programme design, development and approval.

2.9 Since 2013 the University has pursued an extensive programme of curriculum reform entitled Curriculum 2016+, which is embedded in the processes already described in

this section. This aims to involve students in curriculum development more fully and to enhance employability, by reflecting progress in the subject area and related professional practice, fostering creativity, and promoting inclusive practice. It includes collaborative providers and international partners.

2.10 The structure and processes in place for the design, development and approval of programmes allow the University to meet the Expectation, and were reviewed to assess their effectiveness for the wide-ranging curriculum reform being undertaken.

2.11 The review team considered the University's own account of its procedures for design, development and approval of programmes together with relevant documentation provided. Policies for validation and approvals and related guidance for programme teams were scrutinised, specifically the Curriculum 2016+ Validation Handbook. Staff, students and employers were asked in meetings about their involvement with programme design and development and records of planning and approval events were sampled.

2.12 Staff whom the team met were able to describe their involvement with the Curriculum 2016+ initiative and considered it a significant part of the University's transformation agenda. They explained how it was a requirement to give a clear rationale for selected approaches to module and programme development and how this had encouraged them to incorporate new ideas and to work closely with employers to develop work-related skills.

2.13 A clear account was given of staff understanding of, and engagement with, the systems in place, and how the outcomes of Curriculum 2016+ were impacting on student experience and employability. It was also evident that students and employers had been widely involved in curriculum development and that a high value was placed on the outcomes of the new approaches, and how these were complemented by other developments, including new technology.

2.14 The review team was told that validation and approval systems are continuously reviewed and refined in a controlled way to ensure that they are developmental in nature. It was necessary for these processes to be streamlined and as effective as possible to cope with the large volume of validation activity, estimated at about 70 per cent of provision at the time of the review visit. Staff feel that systems are effective and are enabling the desired changes to be brought about. They noted the value of LEAP's support to programme teams at all stages of design, development and approval.

2.15 Central to Curriculum 2016+ is the engagement of students with a view to actively supporting their learning towards greater employability. Student representatives play a key role, especially through their involvement in Staff Student Committees. Extensive student feedback is collated in Quality Enhancement Reports, making these particularly relevant to course improvement. Students reported that they had been actively involved and consulted during the process of course design and revalidation, but expressed the view that they are sometimes constrained by professional body requirements and that this had prevented some desired developments from taking place.

2.16 Employers are extremely positive about their relationship with the University and their ability to influence the curriculum and support employability through placements and other activities, including mentoring and support for entrepreneurship. The team was advised that student satisfaction measures and Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE) data were used as key performance indicators by the Transformation Board to assess progress in achieving the aims of Curriculum 2016+.

2.17 The review team notes the strategic commitment towards significant curriculum reform by the University and finds that the design, development and approval of

programmes within the Curriculum 2016+ project, which has enhanced the embedding of employability into the curriculum and created new approaches to learning and teaching, is **good practice**.

2.18 The team concludes that the University's systems for the design, development and approval of programmes are effective and fit for purpose. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

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



**Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education**

**Findings**

2.19 The University has in place a General Policy for Student Admissions, which sets out the principles and expectations of admission. The policy is approved by the University's Senior Management Group (SMG) and sets out the University's comprehensive summary of policies and practices in place for admission of students to programmes delivered by the University at one of its two campuses. This Policy is kept up to date and reviewed on an annual basis by the Intake Monitoring Group on behalf of the SMG and was last updated in early 2015.

2.20 In the development of the policy the University has been informed by regulatory changes, external sector requirements and sector good practice, including Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Good Practice guides, the Quality Code, UCAS, and Teacher Training requirements and relevant legislation. This policy is available on the University's website.

2.21 This policy makes reference to the University's commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity, inclusivity and fairness. The Equal Opportunities Code of Practice for the Admission of Students sets out the University's procedures for consideration of applicants. Departmental admissions policies and practices are required to be consistent with the University's overall policy. A separate admissions policy is applicable to admissions for the Hull York Medical School (HYMS) available on the HYMS website together with further admissions information for applicants.

2.22 The University provides information on application procedures for research students on the University's Admissions pages, in the online Student Handbook, and on the Graduate School website, including guidelines on how to write a research proposal. Applicants are required to undertake an admissions interview.

2.23 The University publishes both its admissions criteria and information about the process of admission for applicants.

2.24 The University's General Policy for Student Admissions (GPSA) requires that further general and specific entry requirements be published in the prospectus and subject pamphlets. Faculties have in place specific admissions policies relating to their academic provision to supplement the University's GPSA, which are published on the University's website to provide information for applicants. Further information is provided for applicants at open days, applicant days and access to Higher Education events. The University makes information available via separate website links for prospective nursing and healthcare applicants and prospective applicants to the Hull York Medical School (HYMS), as well as information about English Language courses supporting students seeking pre-sessional and longer-term additional English instruction, and any Tier 4 visa language requirements.

2.25 Entry requirements and indications of typical offer levels for undergraduate programmes are provided on the UCAS Courses Data website. Applicants are required to satisfy the entry requirements of the award regulations and the University's Regulations for

Undergraduate Admissions for undergraduate full-time and part-time programmes. The University's Policy states that personal statements, references, and interviews or workshops, where relevant, may be used to inform its decision relating to selection.

2.26 The University has clear organisational arrangements for admissions, with departmental admissions tutors and a professional service team who oversee and implement the University's policy and arrangements for recruitment and selection. This includes International Development Managers, who are based overseas. Training, support and guidance is provided for Admissions Tutors with staff encouraged to attend workshops and conferences, and there is a staff development programme to support appropriate and effective admissions practice. The University advises that reference materials on the internal Staff Portal are also available on the public website.

2.27 The University has on its website a programme of open days and applicant days to provide applicants with opportunities to learn about its provision. For successful applicants, the website has advice and guidance on student transition, skills development and community building. The University's Policy states that applications are welcomed from those with a disability, with support available from a network of Disability Tutors.

2.28 The University's GPSA and comprehensive policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students are designed to align with sector expectations and good practice.

2.29 The University's approach to the recruitment, selection and admission of students adheres to the principles of fair admission. Its policy and processes enable transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive decisions with clear dissemination of policies and procedures, training of staff and annual review mechanisms.

2.30 The design of the policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission allows the Expectation to be met.

2.31 The review team tested the Expectation through the examination of documentary evidence provided by the University, information available on the University's website and in meetings with staff and students. The review team met staff, students and employers, and considered a range of documentary evidence to test the effectiveness of the University's policies and procedures and how these are understood and implemented.

2.32 The University's GPSA sets out clear and comprehensive policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission. The University's annual review, and institutional oversight of this policy by the Intake Monitoring Group and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), ensures that this is accurate, current and aligned with changing sector expectations and guidance. The policy has been updated to take account of relevant sector guidance and good practice, including the Schwartz Review of Fair Admissions, the Office for Fair Access, and UCAS. The University's strategic commitment to access and student success is articulated in the strategic plan and in the University's Access Agreement 2016-17. The GPSA and the Equal Opportunities Code of Practice for the Admission of Students provide clear procedures to ensure that all applications receive due consideration relative to the entry requirements, with processes in place for exceptional and non-standard applicants.

2.33 The terms of reference, support and training provided for Admissions Tutors enables understanding by staff of the required processes and supports consistency of the application of the policies and regulations. Evidence was provided of staff development undertaken by admissions tutors across a range of subject areas including staff from the in-country offices. Further information and reference materials for admissions staff is made available via the internal Staff Portal.

2.34 Information available on the University's website for applicants is clear and transparent. There are comprehensive supplementary admissions policies in place providing subject-specific policies for applicants. Information is provided for applicants on the process for complaints or feedback relating to admissions communications and decisions. The University has in place appropriate mechanisms for accreditation of prior learning, devolution and oversight of admissions decisions in collaborative partners.

2.35 The University has worked in partnership with the Student's Union (HUU) to enhance communications, address student concerns and promote the engagement of students affected by the Scarborough transition through the Scarborough Transition Group. This group has established Principles of an Excellent Student Experience, which have been developed and adopted by staff teaching subjects delivered at the Scarborough campus during the transition. A risk register is in place and investment has been made in the facilities at Scarborough campus to enhance the student experience.

2.36 The University promotes a shared understanding of its approach to recruitment, selection and admissions through clear terms of reference for admissions tutors, as well as comprehensive policies, procedures and regulations and fostering of proactive partnership working between academic areas and professional services. There is appropriate and effective organisation of staff for implementation of the University's GPSA, admissions policies and procedures. The Student Admissions and Recruitment Service has been reviewed and informed by the outputs of the initial phase of the Student Journey Project, the principles of the Schwartz Report and close consultation with key senior staff members in subject and service areas. A new organisational design streamlines and centralises the process from application to registration, and includes clear objectives and performance indicators for the Admissions Service.

2.37 The University and HYMS undertake a wide range of activities and initiatives to support widening access to higher education, including open and applicant days, and the Schools and Colleges Liaison Service (SCLS) work at UCAS-arranged conventions for Schools, Colleges and Academies in the UK. A significant percentage of the University's students come from widening participation backgrounds.

2.38 The University's involvement in regional partnerships, including the Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics Programme, Federation of Colleges and the Access to Higher Education Network, supports the University's Access and Success Strategy for widening participation and increasing opportunities for applicants. The University's Access Agreement sets out the approach to promotion of opportunities for widening participation students, as well as engagement as a regional anchor institution.

2.39 Meetings with students confirmed that they are clear about the expectations of the course from information provided to them in the prospectus, subject pamphlets, on the website and at open/applicant days. The work undertaken by the University in partnership with HUU to address clear information for applicants on hidden costs of study, and the development of a Policy on the Transparency of Course Costs for Students, has provided greater clarity and consistency.

2.40 Students confirmed that their course and student experience had been consistent with their expectations, based on information provided to them by the University to inform their application. The review team met students who had been supported through involvement in widening participation and access events, as well as summer schools.

2.41 To support student transition to the University, prior information is provided, including pre-arrival study and registration information. There are face-to-face induction activities on arrival and further support is available via the Welcome Week for international students and pre-departure briefings for some overseas markets. The University's Graduate

School offers a formal induction session at the start of each academic year, with some of this repeated at other entry points during the year. Academic areas supplement this central induction activity for new postgraduates.

2.42 Academic areas, Student Recruitment Directorate and the International Office offer advice and guidance to successful applicants, and work in partnership to support students. Widening participation students receive advice and support for skills development. The University's induction policy, plans and schedules provide a consistent approach to supporting students in the early phase of their course, which, in meetings with the review team, students confirmed to be valuable.

2.43 The University's approach to recruitment, selection and admission is effective in adhering to the principles of fair admission. The comprehensive GPSA and supplementary policies and procedures provide a transparent, reliable, valid and inclusive approach and are implemented effectively by trained admissions staff.

2.44 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**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***

#### **Findings**

2.45 The University has in place a comprehensive set of strategies, policies and procedures designed to support and develop the student learning experience. ULTAC is accountable to Senate for monitoring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching. ULTAC is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), whose remit includes responsibility for learning, teaching and academic partnerships. Policy and priorities in the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices are set by the Learning and Teaching Strategy (2012-15), which places particular emphasis on partnership with students in the management of the educational experience.

2.46 In addition to the standard mechanisms for the management of the learning environment, the student academic experience has been the main focus of the University's Transformation Programme, which grew out of the Strategic Plan (2011-15). The Transformation Programme began in 2013 and consists of four interrelated strategic initiatives overseen and coordinated by the University Transformation Board: curriculum renewal; a student experience programme; investment in staff resources, quality and development; and investment in both the physical and digital infrastructure.

2.47 The planning of the transformation initiatives was based on an analysis of the student journey from the first point of contact, through the years of study at the University, to graduation and beyond. The Student Journey Project, which was still in progress at the time of the review visit, had also informed the design of 12 initiatives that impacted on the student experience in areas such as induction, retention, personal supervision, communications, employability, and international experience. The policies, procedures and initiatives that the University has in place provide robust mechanisms allowing it to review and systematically enhance learning opportunities, teaching practices and the wider learning environment.

2.48 The review team read documents describing the University's academic policies and the development of its learning and teaching strategies, together with minutes of committees accountable for the management and review of teaching practices and the development and allocation of learning resources. The review team met academics and professional staff responsible for curriculum design and learning support as well as students, including some who had participated in the design and planning of the initiatives contributing to the University's Transformation Programme.

2.49 Key policies and services supporting learning are the University's mechanisms for developing staff teaching and research skills and the planning and funding that ensures the availability of appropriate learning materials, particularly the library's physical and digital holdings. The review team confirm that staff development is comprehensively supported through induction and guidance for those new to teaching roles. The University is committed to a 'vision for learning' that links the research conducted by staff with the teaching provided to students. Students whom the team met saw positive benefits in being taught by research-active staff, and some indicated that they had been included in research activities in various ways.

2.50 All early career staff are required to take the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, or its equivalent. Ongoing professional development is supported by the Disciplinary Approaches to Research and Teaching Excellence (DARTE) framework through which the Higher Education Academy (HEA) accredits staff who undertake further training and development. LEAP offers programmes and short courses within the Continual Professional Development (CPD) Framework. The review team saw data confirming the take-up of these development opportunities and met both new and experienced staff who described the value of the training opportunities they had undertaken. Further recognition of the quality of teaching is reflected by the student-led Teaching Awards project, which had produced more than 900 student nominations of staff judged to provide excellent and innovative teaching.

2.51 At the time of the review visit the most conspicuous contribution to support for learning and teaching was the recently completed £28 million reconstruction and modernisation of the Brynmor Jones Library. This project had been planned jointly with students to give priority to improving access not only to learning materials but to guidance and assistance with learning delivered within the library. Elected student representatives sit on the university's Learning Spaces Advisory Group and the Teaching Spaces Group. The space in the modernised library has been designed less around collections and more in terms of spaces and services that students and staff can use for learning and research. The library is open 24 hours a day from September to July. The opening of the new library was combined with an upgrading of the campus-wide wireless network, which students and staff confirmed had substantially enhanced access and allowed more varied ways of study.

2.52 The new library is designed to be a site from which a range of learning services is available to students. One example examined by the reviewers was the scheme for Student Success Advisers (SSAs), which uses professional staff linked to academic departments but based in Library and Learning Innovation to support the induction, progression and retention of students, and particularly to identify those students whose attendance or progress is less than expected. The SSAs liaise with academic tutors and administrative staff as well as central support services such as Skills, Disability, Careers, International Office and HUU, signposting students to additional support as appropriate. Staff and students confirmed that the SSA scheme was working well, and following further evaluation it is likely that the roles and remit of the SSAs may be extended.

2.53 The development of the library was integrated into a broader set of initiatives designed to enhance student learning and, particularly, to increase access to digital learning and to develop information literacy. The documentation seen, and the evidence heard, by the review team supported the University's claim that the elements of the Transformation Programme were planned as an integrated strategy. There was evidence of coordination of the library development with the enhancement of learning spaces across the campus, including lecture and seminar rooms, and with introduction of a new VLE system that has been designed with student input to feature lecture capture, e-submission, and e-marking and feedback. In addition, the ongoing programme of complete curriculum renewal (Curriculum 2016+) explicitly requires all new programmes of study to include a specification of how students will be provided with opportunities to develop academic and transferable skills, including digital literacy.

2.54 While the transformation agenda is not complete, and was only beginning to be demonstrated by systematic outcome data, the review team heard evidence from students at all levels, and from academic and professional staff, that the cross-institutional strategy of transformation was changing the organisational culture and greatly improving the learning experience. In the review team's view, the contribution of the library development project to the enhancement of the learning support for students is **good practice**.

2.55 In the review team's opinion, the policies and procedures supporting learning opportunities and teaching practices are robust. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**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**

2.56 The University has developed a comprehensive range of policies and codes of practice that define and provide services and guidance to support students in the development of academic, personal and employment skills. The Strategic Plan (2011-15) committed the University to the concept of the University of Hull Graduate, who has 'actively benefited from an education in more than just the academic sense, prepared for the world of work and is able to compete on a global level'. This conception of the Hull graduate is restated in the new University Plan (2016-20), which sets an objective of equipping students 'with knowledge and skills to serve them for a lifetime' by ensuring that the 'student experience is an integral part of their learning experience'.

2.57 The University Registrar is responsible for the direction and oversight of services supporting student development and achievement, including the Student Experience Programme (StEP), which between 2013 and mid 2015 oversaw investment in 12 projects designed to enhance the quality and range of student support services. The core professional services are the Careers and Employability Service (CES), Student Administrative Services, Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support (SWLWS), Library and Learning Innovation, the Graduate Development Services Group and the Skills Team. Guidance in accessing the range of support services is provided by the one-stop AskHU desk and by Hull University Union (the HUU Advice Centre). Taken together, these policies and services provide an appropriate infrastructure of resources to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

2.58 The review team considered documentation including policies, codes of practice, websites, and committee minutes and papers. The team also spoke to students, academic and professional support staff, and to a number of employers who are actively involved in the development of students' employment-related skills.

2.59 Once accepted for a place at the University, students can access the Student Transition Experience Management and Support interactive online package, which addresses the transition to university life including health and safety, accommodation and faculty-specific information. This facility is accessed by more than 80 per cent of new students each year. Some students, selected from the pre-University Talent Development Programme, are offered a pre-session five-day residential programme of educational and social events. Students declaring a disability are also offered individual support. All students can access University, faculty and departmental induction events guided by the Code of Practice: Welcome, Orientation and Induction. Students whom the team met confirmed the availability and effectiveness of all of these forms of provision.

2.60 A significant area of recent additional investment by the University has been in the Skills Team and the Centre for Educational Studies, designed to enhance support for internships, placements and employability skills (see Section 5). The StEP programme has also supported initiatives in reviewing and enhancing the personal supervisor system after HUU drew attention to declining contact and student satisfaction with their personal supervisors. The outcome is a new Policy on Academic Tutoring, which is being introduced and monitored.



2.61 In June 2015 the StEP management group also approved a proposal for a new Retention Strategy and programme designed to focus on patterns of non-continuation among students and the possible causal factors in both provision and student backgrounds. While retention data for the University place it in the mid-range of higher education institutions and retention rates had been improving slightly, the object of the new retention strategy is to establish an institutional framework of interventions that enhance student engagement and success.

2.62 The review team concludes that the University has adopted innovative approaches to the development of students' academic, personal and employment skills. The use of planning frameworks, such as the Student Journey Project and the StEP programme, has supported more integrated, multi-service and multi-professional methods for managing the overall student experience. The evidence presented at the review team's meetings with students and staff confirmed the effectiveness of these innovations.

2.63 The review team considers that the range of provision in place to support student achievement meets the Expectation and the level of associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**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**

2.64 The University is committed to working in partnership with HUU in the management of academic quality and standards, and the assurance and enhancement of an outstanding student experience in which students are placed at the heart of the institution. This is documented through an exemplary UCP, which was instituted in September 2011 to ensure effective student representation at all levels of the institution, on all relevant University committees: Staff Student Committees; Faculty Boards and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees; and University-level committees, including Academic Council and Senate. The UCP is updated on an annual basis to allow for personnel changes in HUU and to reflect developments in partnership working.

2.65 The UCP articulates the comprehensive nomination and election process for Course Representatives and details the establishment, membership, scope of business, and organisation and management of Staff Student Committees. These meet four times a year, with agendas, minutes and papers sent out to members at least seven days in advance of meetings. There are opportunities for Course Representatives to Chair and act as Secretary for the meetings, as well as accredit their level of contribution (bronze, silver and gold) to the Hull Employability Award. This prepares students well for future employment by enabling them to develop these graduate skills.

2.66 In meetings during the review visit, students confirmed that they have opportunities to give feedback to the institution via module evaluation questionnaires, mid-semester reviews and through their Course Representatives.

2.67 All taught modules (undergraduate, postgraduate and research) have a standard module and teaching quality evaluation questionnaire, which students are invited to complete either online or on paper towards the end of the module. The questionnaire has two standard sections (A and C) with an opportunity for local, discipline-based questions in part B. There is a requirement for the University to reflect critically on the feedback received from students and to discuss with them the issues they have raised, noting the actions to be taken by the University in response to students' feedback. This is achieved through the sharing of a critical reflection report, which includes the aggregated data from parts A and B of the questionnaires for the modules that students have undertaken, through Staff Student Committees and via other forums for the wider student body, such as the University's VLE e-Bridge.

2.68 There is a further requirement on any taught module for student feedback from the previous cohort of students to be shared with the current cohort of students electronically and/or via module handbooks. The module and teaching quality evaluation questionnaires, and programme evaluation questionnaires, feed into the University's annual monitoring. There is some awareness among students of the opportunities to take part in Periodic Reviews and the University's Quality Enhancement Report panels.

2.69 Course Representatives are offered training to prepare them for their role. From 2013, this has been offered by HUU in partnership with University staff and is supplemented by a comprehensive Course Representative Handbook. Students whom the review team met reported that their Course Representatives have good mechanisms in place to canvass and collate the views of those students whom they represent and feed back to the student body

as a whole. Examples cited included the sharing of notes from Staff Student Committees with the whole department, the effective use of social networks and at the Scarborough campus, the use of video blogs. It was reported to the team that Staff Student Committees feed back to HUU and Student Councils. HUU monitors the effectiveness of the Course Representative system via an annual Education Survey. Over the last three years, the majority of students sampled (63 per cent) have found the course representative system to be effective.

2.70 From February 2015, faculties have been required to produce a report at the end of each semester summarising the actions undertaken in response to issues raised at Staff Student Committees, using a standard reporting template, and to confirm further actions identified. The requirement is for the report to be submitted to subject areas, faculties, LEAP, HUU and finally to ULTAC, to enable a joined-up approach to issue resolution, sharing of good practice, Quality Enhancement Reports and Periodic Reviews.

2.71 HUU produces an annual Student Written Submission (SWS), which focuses on quality and enhancement from the student perspective, with recommendations for both HUU and the University to be integrated into University action plans. The SWS is monitored and overseen by ULTAC, having been informed by annual reports and minutes from Staff Student Committees that summarise issues raised and actions taken, together with data from the National Student Survey, HUU Education Survey, and the HUU Rate Your University survey.

2.72 Beyond these deliberative structures, the University provides a number of other communication channels for students, such as regular meetings with members of the University Executive, including the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), University Registrar and Secretary, and informally at University conferences and events. While some of the students whom the review team met feel that departments could do a little more to promote the changes they have made in response to student feedback, they all stated that departments are good at listening to students and responding to the points and issues that they make to the University. They feel that staff are approachable, accessible and responsive to the points they raise and that they can raise points directly with their lecturers.

2.73 The review team considered a range of documentation supplied by the University, with confirmation obtained through meetings held with University staff and students.

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

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

**Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning**

**Findings**

2.75 The University has clear mechanisms and procedures to ensure that its assessment practices are robust, valid and reliable and that they enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes of programmes and modules. The Code of Practice: Assessment Procedures explains the University's requirements and responsibilities for the conduct of assessment, marking and moderation. These are fair, transparent and consistent and also applied to programmes in collaborative provision. In addition, it details procedural rules, instruction to invigilators, alternative and reasonable adjustments to arrangements for disabilities, appropriate feedback mechanisms and assessment while abroad. Equivalent requirements regarding assessment and recognition of prior learning are provided for collaborative partners and outlined in the Collaborative Handbook.

2.76 The University assures itself that all staff involved in student assessment are competent through the expectation for staff to undertake the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice as well as continued professional development, for example the University's Disciplinary Approaches to Research and Teaching Excellence (DARTE) scheme.

2.77 The University has clear mechanisms for recognition of prior learning, detailed in the Code of Practice: Accreditation of Prior Learning. This Code also highlights the limitations regarding the prior learning, and provides details on decision-making processes and the importance of self-assurance.

2.78 The University promotes and supports academic integrity and good academic conduct by providing information and hosting events about academic skills, including academic writing and referencing. In response to student feedback, standard approaches to academic referencing were introduced and guidance is available from the Skills Team.

2.79 The Annual Monitoring of Programmes procedures provide commentary from students and, together with external examiners reports, enable programme directors to measure the effectiveness and quality of assessment and feedback (See Expectation B5).

2.80 Comprehensive programme and module handbooks are used to communicate the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and procedures, expectations, and information about unfair means and plagiarism. Regulations are also provided regarding unfair means, professional unsuitability and professional misconduct. All forms of summative written assessment are required to be screened using plagiarism-detection software, wherever this is practicable.

2.81 The University has clear and well defined policies regarding assessment development (see Expectation A3.2), as well as policies for feedback on formative and summative assessment. These also include guidelines and procedures for making reasonable adjustments to examination and assessment procedures, including time-related changes, alternative assessment forms and the use of specialised equipment.

2.82 There are clear and established academic appointment criteria to assess the competency and experience of staff to undertake assessment. Staff involved in teaching and assessment who are not employed by the University are required to obtain a Recognised Teacher Status and the respective Code of Practice: Recognised Teacher Status (RTS) provides details on the requirements, including experience and professional qualifications, as well as limitations, for example RTS granted with restrictions.

2.83 All assessment that leads to overall module and programme outcomes is subject to external scrutiny and reflects any additional requirements set by professional, statutory and regulatory Bodies. The University sets out a requirement for open second-marking of all work marked by staff with less than one year's experience of assessment in higher education.

2.84 Mock exams, mini-assessments and practice essays are used to help and prepare students for formal assessments. Students commended the use of e-submission and e-feedback and the use of other online platforms for feedback. Students particularly welcome the open-door policies and availability of lecturers, or local tutors, to discuss feedback on their work.

2.85 The responsibility for monitoring feedback to students is devolved to the faculties. The University's guidelines determine that feedback on assessment should be provided within four semester weeks. However, students whom the review team met lacked a clear understanding about this requirement and there was noticeable inconsistency on the timing of feedback provision across the University. As a result, the review team **recommends** that the University should ensure that all information available to students about timescales for return of assessed work with feedback is accurate and consistent.

2.86 As part of the process of transformation the University is working to review its current assessment practice, using the Eight Steps to Auditing Current Programme Assessment guidance. The University is also looking for ways to encourage diversity, innovation and focus on employability in assessment and feedback practices. In support of this the University has introduced the Innovations in Student Learning Scheme, which provides funding for projects that develop aspects of student learning in any academic discipline.

2.87 The University has clear guidelines and regulations for assessment, recognition of prior learning and marking. The review team confirmed the efficiency of the mechanisms through the extensive evidence provided by the University and in meetings with academic staff. Students at all levels whom the review team met are enthusiastic and knowledgeable when discussing assessment and marking procedures. They confirmed that the processes are effective at testing the intended learning outcomes. Students are particularly happy about the developments that the transformation process is bringing about, giving e-assessment and e-feedback as examples.

2.88 The review team explored the documentation available regarding assessment, recognition of prior learning and marking. The Expectation was discussed in meetings with academic staff, who showed high level of awareness and knowledge around the current assessment practices as well as developments introduced by the Curriculum 2016+ project. Both professional and academic staff were able to explain the rationale behind the developments in the assessment practice. The students were positive about the University's requirements for assessment and marking despite showing some lack of understanding about the policy of assessed work return timelines.

2.89 The Expectation is met and the associated level of 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**

2.90 The University has clear governance and mechanisms outlining the scope and use of external examining. A recent mapping exercise undertaken by the University ensured that its regulations are up to date and fully aligned to the Quality Code.

2.91 Heads of Department have devolved responsibility for ensuring that all programmes and modules delivered by the department or, in the case of collaborative provision, managed by the department, are subject to oversight by suitably qualified and experienced external examiners. The departments are also responsible for providing external examiners with any material associated with programme and modules.

2.92 External examiners are nominated by academic areas, endorsed by the relevant Dean of Faculty and appointed by ULTAC. Any irregular cases and potential exceptions are addressed by LEAP, providing ULTAC with the necessary information for action. This ensures that the University has clear oversight of appointed external examiners.

2.93 External examiners are involved in programme development process and provide commentary when a programme undergoes any major amendments. As part of the University's commitment to independent externality, new programme development and redevelopment processes must include external examiner advice (see Expectation A3.4).

2.94 The University uses a standard template for external examiner reports, which includes sections covering the appropriateness and comparability of academic standards, the quality of candidates' work, the impartiality and quality of marking process, and the quality of the administration, as well as an invitation to comment on good practice. In addition, the standard template also includes information regarding the submission of the report, appropriate contacts for additional information and ways in which the external examiner's concerns can be progressed. There are clear mechanisms that enable external examiners to raise issues of serious concern by producing a separate confidential report for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

2.95 External examiners' reports must be submitted two months from the date of the relevant Programme Board and the University has clear procedures for monitoring the quality of the reports. Their reports are considered at several levels in the University and have a significant role in the University's programme monitoring and review processes (See Expectation B8 and A3.4).

2.96 The University has acknowledged the previously identified lack of consistency in the provision of information about external examiners and their reports to students. Information about external examiners is now provided to students via student handbooks and the academic information system. Academic staff are responsible for sharing and discussing external examiner reports at Student-Staff Committees and they are also available online.

2.97 Newly appointed external examiners have the opportunity to meet with the outgoing external examiners, thereby aiding consistency. A standard format welcome letter that includes all necessary information is sent out to new external examiners. A biannual newsletter is also sent out to all external examiners advising them of developments within the University and any changes in practice. As part of the transformation process, the University is piloting a digital external examining process and an online induction programme.

2.98 The review team examined documentation relating to the University's management of external examining, including Codes of Practice, report templates and information available to students. Examples of completed external examiner reports are detailed and thoroughly reflect the University's requirements. The team was able to trace the external examiner report journey as well as subsequent actions taken through meeting records, from departmental to University level. The review team also confirmed the understanding of external examining roles and responsibilities in meetings with students, academic and professional staff.

2.99 The regulations and mechanisms for external examining are well documented and understood by both academic and professional staff. Academic staff highlighted the value of external examiner input to programmes with professional body requirements. The University has a shared understanding and puts clear emphasis on the value of external examining in assessment procedures, programme design and validation, while encouraging its own staff to act as external examiners at other institutions. The University has rigorous mechanisms to ensure that routes of escalation are available and that significant commentary is provided at the appropriate levels.

2.100 The review team concludes that procedures for external examining are clear and effective, that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

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



**Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review**

**Findings**

2.101 The University operates a system of annual monitoring of programmes, which contributes towards the faculty-based Quality Enhancement Report. It is described as a process of critical self-reflection, designed to ensure continuing validity and relevance of provision. This monitoring is done on a standard template, using an action planning approach. This provides an analytical review of the programme, an evaluation of student performance data, and consideration of feedback from students, external examiners and other stakeholders. Similar arrangements apply to collaborative providers of the University, who also complete annual monitoring reports and PQERs (see section B10).

2.102 An annual monitoring process (with six-monthly updates) is also in place for research degrees and includes a training and development requirement for students and supervisors. Electronic progress monitoring and reporting is now being implemented following a successful trial. Annual monitoring reports for research degrees go to Research Degrees Committee via Graduate Research Directors.

2.103 Annual monitoring reports contribute to the periodic review processes of the University, as described in section A3.3.

2.104 The arrangements in place for monitoring and review in the University are clear and systematic, and allow for the effective maintenance of academic standards and the quality assurance and enhancement of learning opportunities for students.

2.105 To test the Expectation, the team considered the University's own account of its monitoring and review processes and examined documentation for the guidance of staff and others in this activity. The team sampled records of annual monitoring of programmes and quality enhancement reports, and discussed the purpose, value and outcomes of monitoring and review activities with staff and students in a series of meetings with representational groups from departments, faculties, professional and central services, and partner institutions.

2.106 The review team formed a clear view that monitoring and review activity forms the foundation of enhancement in the University. The University aligns its quality enhancement review themes with QAA's themes for Higher Education Review. In 2013-14 the theme was Student Employability, which was also used as the theme for the 2015 Learning and Teaching conference. This theme has facilitated the work of the Curriculum 2016+ initiative, which particularly seeks to enhance employability. The team was informed that one outcome had been the adoption of a wide variety of approaches to managing placements, according to subject need.

2.107 Staff are able to demonstrate full understanding of the processes for AMP and QER and how their systematic use enable them to improve provision. For example, in the Education Faculty staff have more time available to work alongside partners in developing strategies for learning. The QERs form an effective vehicle for sharing good practice across faculties and receipt of panel reports by ULTAC enables good practice to be identified centrally. The University held its inaugural QER Learning Initiative (QERLI) conference in April 2015 for dissemination of QER outcomes.

2.108 There is a comprehensive set of guidance documents available to support monitoring and review activities, including the Codes of Practice: Ensuring Validity and Relevance and the Code of Practice: QERs. The central LEAP unit provides a resource for monitoring and review support and its staff sit on Faculty Learning and Teaching committees. It also convenes a panel to analyse Quality Enhancement Reports, providing feedback to the Faculty concerned and reporting on to ULTAC. Quality Enhancement Report panels include representatives from other faculties to provide externality and training is provided to panel members.

2.109 Student feedback is considered extensively in the monitoring processes and a student representative is a full trained member of each University Periodic Review Panel. The University shared its commitment to fully engage students in monitoring and review, and advised the team of its work with HUU to involve students more directly in reporting activity. The review team **affirms** the steps taken to further engage students in the Quality Enhancement Report (QER) process.

2.110 The team concludes that the University has effective mechanisms in place for monitoring and review, which assure the quality and enhancement of learning opportunities.. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

**Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints**

**Findings**

2.111 The University has in place regulations and procedures for the handling of student academic appeals and complaints about the quality of learning opportunities. These regulations are approved by the University's Senate and are reviewed regularly by ULTAC. The appeals and complaints regulations were updated in August 2015 to take into account changing external expectations.

2.112 The University's Academic Appeals and Queries Regulations require that all appeals and queries be conducted in accordance with the Quality Code, Section 5 and the Office of Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) Good Practice Framework (December 2014). They also state that the University will seek to uphold the principles of fairness, consistency, equity and equal opportunities. Details about Academic Appeals, including a link to the University's regulations and appeal forms, is provided within the Student Handbooks for undergraduate students, postgraduate taught students and postgraduate research students. The University also provides students with advice about how to make a complaint in the form of a short leaflet.

2.113 The regulations set out a clear procedure for academic appeals. The procedures encourage early resolution, including in collaborative provision, prior to University involvement. The Graduate School manages the appeals procedure for postgraduate research students and appoints a Graduate Research Director to investigate any cases and report back to the Director of the Graduate School, who decides whether or not there is a valid case.

2.114 The 'Regulations for the investigation and determination of complaints by students' (Evidence 036) set out the procedures for addressing formal complaints and are designed to reflect principles of natural justice, the Quality Code *Chapter B9*, and the OIA Good Practice Framework. These commit the University to encouraging informal resolution, to handling complaints speedily in a fair and efficient manner, and to treating complaints appropriately with respect for confidentiality (Evidence 036]. The University has introduced changes from September 2015 to ensure the process is fully aligned with the OIA Framework, particularly in respect of complaints about third party providers of services and anonymous complaints.

2.115 Statistics from HUU's Advice Centre show that there has been a slow increase in first-time clients enquiring about the complaints process. The 2015 Education Survey shows that 30 per cent of respondents felt inclined to make a complaint, an increase of 9 per cent on the same question in the 2013 survey. Data submitted to ULTAC in February 2015 confirmed that a low number of students are making complaints.

2.116 The University's Senate has oversight for the regulations and they are reviewed regularly by ULTAC.

2.117 The process for dealing with appeals and complaints is transparent. An annual report is produced on appeals and complaints are reported as part of the annual quality enhancement process.

2.118 The evidence examined by the review team and taken from its meetings with students and staff would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.119 The review team considered documentation including regulations, policies and procedures, information made available to students in student handbooks, websites and committee minutes and papers. It also spoke to students, academic and professional support staff.

2.120 The University's regulations and procedures relating to appeals and complaints were considered by the review team to be fair, accessible and timely. Annual reports on appeals and complaints are considered by the University to provide institutional oversight of their effectiveness and to support further enhancement. The University makes effective use of external expectations and sector guidance (for example, the Quality Code and the OIA's Good Practice Framework) in reviewing these regulations and maintains oversight of these to keep these current and accurate. The Academic Appeals and Queries Regulations were amended in May 2014 (in response to student feedback), to permit students who have submitted an appeal to graduate, and also to allow students who have graduated to submit an appeal (provided it is made within the timescale).

2.121 The review team notes the concerns raised by HUU in its Student Written Submission regarding apparent student concerns around making a complaint. Students do not feel that it will make a difference and also fear repercussions. This was tested by the review team in meetings with students. The students whom they met were familiar with the appeals and complaints processes and did not advise the review team of any concerns.

2.122 The review team considered the information provided to students about appeals and complaints in student handbooks, in the University's regulations and on the University's website. The team noted that the regulations relating to appeals had been updated recently, with a revised time period for the lodging of an appeal of 14 days implemented from September 2015. These revised regulations are included in Student Handbooks with a link to the University's website and regulations, and the University's Appeal Wizard. The latter provides a helpful application to guide students through the process. In a meeting with students there was a concern about a change to the period for submission of an appeal, which had changed from 14 days to 10 (working) days.

2.123 The review team found that this revision to the appeal regulations has not been amended in the University's Appeal Wizard and was at variance with the revised regulations. The review team **recommends** that the University should ensure that all information available to students about the period for lodging academic appeals is accurate and consistent.

2.124 The University's regulations and procedures for the handling of appeals and complaints are effective and are informed by principles of fairness, consistency, equity and equal opportunities, and a commitment to considering appeals and complaints in a timely manner, informed by the Quality Code and OIA expectations.

2.125 The evidence examined through documentation and discussions with stakeholders indicated robust and transparent regulations and procedures, which were being implemented effectively. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**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**

2.126 The University has a number of partnership arrangements both in the UK and overseas. The focus of the UK partnerships involves working with local, regional further education colleges through the University of Hull Federation of Colleges (FoC). The University validates the provision of its awards with eight further education colleges. In addition, the University has a long-established partnership with the University of York to provide joint awards through the Hull York Medical School (HYMS).

2.127 Outside of the UK the University has partnerships in Europe to deliver dual awards with institutions in France and Germany. In Hong Kong the University operates a distance delivery of its awards that involves staff from the University delivering programmes with a partner Hong Kong institution, supported by local teachers who gain Recognised Teacher Status granted by the University. Additionally, the University has partnership arrangements in Singapore, Oman and Bahrain.

2.128 The University's collaborative partnership arrangements further the approach articulated in the University's Strategic Plan to be an engaged university acting as an anchor institution in the region. In particular the University works with local further education colleges for the purpose of widening access and participation in higher education and developing higher-level skills in the region. The University works with a number of local partners, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, thereby contributing to regional development planning and addressing local skill shortages. The draft Strategic Plan for 2016-20 reaffirms this intention and aims to strengthen both the collaboration with further education partners and the University's status as an internationally engaged university.

2.129 The University regulations, codes of practice and procedures are applied to all collaborative partner provision, both nationally and internationally. There is an organisational structure for the oversight and accountability of the approval and delivery of collaborative provision, which is applied consistently. This is led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and supported by the Quality Officers (Collaborative Provision and Educational Partnerships) under the delegated authority of the University Senate. A register is kept of all collaborative provision.

2.130 Policies and procedures are in place to assess risk prior to entering into any collaborative agreement with a partner and the agreements are reviewed on a regular basis. Partnership approvals are classified in four levels representing the level of risk, with progression agreements and incoming study abroad agreements requiring the lowest level approval, to dual and joint awards requiring the highest level Senate approval.

2.131 Arrangements for the establishment of dual awards and joint awards are clearly stated in the relevant Education Partnership Chapters of the Quality Handbook and recorded in formal agreements.

2.132 The University's policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.133 In testing the Expectation, the review team examined relevant strategies and procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of collaborative provision. The review team sampled initial site visit reports and annual quality reports of partner institutions and reviewed the minutes from relevant committee meetings. The team met a selection of University staff and students from partner institutions, including students studying outside of the UK.

2.134 The University describes itself as an anchor institution in the region, being the only University located in the immediate vicinity, and it has for a number of years pursued a strategy of working collaboratively with local and regional further education colleges to provide higher education opportunities. This has been successfully managed through the establishment of Joint Boards of Study (JBoS) and Joint Development Boards (JDB), which ensure a consistent approach to programme delivery between the partner institutions and the University.

2.135 Working in partnership and collaborating with other institutions is a key element of the University's strategy. The draft strategic plan for 2016-20 sets out the intention for the collaboration to expand internationally.

2.136 At the time of the review visit there were 2,575 students with the Federation of Colleges (FoC) and a new partnership model was being developed for the transfer of provision at the Scarborough campus.

2.137 The University has a successful partnership arrangement offering dual awards and the team held meetings with students enrolled on these programmes, who expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and with their learning experience. In addition, the University has operated a successful partnership with the University of York and the National Health Service, having established the Hull York Medical School in 2003 to deliver joint awards. The most recent review from the General Medical Council describes the School as being committed to delivering high quality medical education and training.

2.138 The University requires all those engaged in the delivery or support of programmes leading to the University's awards to apply for, and be granted, Recognised Teacher Status (RTS). Support is provided for staff in partner institutions for programme development, approval and subsequent delivery. Staff from FoC partners attend staff development sessions provided by LEAP and the Quality Officer (Collaborative Provision).

2.139 The University actively and successfully supports the sharing of good practice with partners through a range of activities, including the JBoS, the JDB, a biannual Collaborative Provision Forum, a Quality Enhancement Forum and an annual Collaborative Provision Conference, all of which are hosted by the University.

2.140 The University has amended a number of its codes of practice for use by partners and is in the process of reviewing and revising its Quality Handbook and Quality and Standards Framework to better manage the increasingly diverse collaborative arrangements.

2.141 Risk is well managed and monitored effectively. Initial risk assessment of new prospective partners is carried out prior to the start of programme delivery and formal agreements are put in place to ensure clarity of responsibilities. There is a formal mechanism for the approval and annual review of programmes, which is in line with University procedures.

2.142 The University Code of Practice: Collaborative Handbook sets out plainly the quality assurance framework for collaborative provision. The University undertakes a risk assessment of potential partners to satisfy itself that the partner institution has the capacity

to fulfil its role in any agreement and that the educational objectives are compatible with the University's own.

2.143 There are legally binding written agreements for each partnership and these are regularly reviewed. These make clear the conditions with regards to serial arrangements and use of the University's name. Compliance with these is regularly monitored. The agreements clearly specify the responsibility, role, authority and expectations of both partners.

2.144 There is a two-tier approach to approving arrangements. Approval of progression agreement, study abroad, student exchanges and the delivery of credit and awards by a partner institution are authorised by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). Any arrangement that involves a joint or dual award requires Senate approval following a recommendation by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

2.145 The University sets out action to be taken in the event of the termination of a partnership agreement, which ensures that students are given every possibility to complete their studies.

2.146 Records of student achievement are kept by the University and it also issues all certificates and awards. A code of practice for collaborative provision production of transcripts makes clear the requirements of partners where the University does not hold individual module marks for students, to ensure compliance with the University's procedures. Where awards delivered in partnership are subject to PSRB requirements, prospective students are made fully aware of these requirements.

2.147 There is a comprehensive policy and process for the admission of students both on campus and at partner institutions. The admissions policy is reviewed regularly. The University's code of practice relating to the devolution of admissions decisions to partner institutions provides clear guidance on the process for delegated authority and expectations and is monitored effectively.

2.148 External examiners are appointed, inducted and managed by the University. A code of practice articulates the requirements, responsibilities and expectations of external examiners. This code of practice applies consistently to awards at the University and those delivered by partner institutions.

2.149 The annual and periodic monitoring and review of programmes offered through other delivery organisations follows the same procedures as those offered within the University. All modules and programmes undergo periodic review. The scope of the Curriculum 2016+ initiative covers all collaborative partnership provision.

2.150 Legally binding written agreements stipulate the arrangements for public information, and the University's collaborative handbook sets out the scope of partner authority and responsibility. The University maintains responsibility for the use of its name, and approval must be sought before partners use the University name in any public domain. Joint Development Boards monitor and report compliance with this annually.

2.151 Student work placements, study abroad programmes and Erasmus+ exchanges are organised effectively by faculties and schools following the guidance of the University's code of practice on placement learning. Work placements and internships are valued by both students and employers. The Curriculum 2016+ project and the University's employability strategy aim to increase the opportunities for students to undertake work placements and internships.

2.152 The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

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



**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**

2.153 The University of Hull has a long-established reputation as a research university. It submitted research by 355 academics in 16 units of assessment to the national Research Excellence Framework in 2014 (REF 2014) and 61 per cent of the research was rated 3\* or 4\*. Currently there are 836 students registered for research degrees (with an additional 70 at Hull York Medical School) across 21 disciplines, with more than 300 in the Faculty of Science and Engineering and more than 200 in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. A wide range of research degree programmes are available, supported by more than 300 supervisors: the MRes, MA and MSc by research, M.Phil, PhD, MD, EdD, PsyD, PhD by published work, ClinPsyD, and some practice-led doctorates (such as the PhD in Drama: Theory and Performance, and the PhD in Creative Writing).

2.154 The regulations governing the research programmes are set out in the Quality Handbook and in the University Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Students. Students can access comprehensive guidance in an online Student Handbook and in discipline-specific postgraduate handbooks, which are updated annually. Detailed guidance for supervisors is provided in a further handbook.

2.155 Senate is responsible for the standards and quality of research and research degrees. Detailed oversight is managed by the University Research Degrees Committee (RDC), which reports to the University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC) chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). The Graduate School coordinates research training and supervision while responsibility for the provision of appropriate research environments rests with the faculties, particularly the Faculty Graduate Research Directors (GRDs), and the academic departments in which the students are based. Students are represented on RDC and faculty committees. The University has in place appropriate regulatory and administrative arrangements to ensure the management of the quality and standards of its research degree programmes.

2.156 The review team reviewed regulations, codes of practice and guidance documentation describing the policies and processes for admission, supervision, student progress, research training, thesis submission, examiners and examinations, student representation and academic appeals. Recent minutes and papers of committees responsible for research students at University and faculty level were read by the team. In addition, the team met a sample of research students registered at the University, as well as academic and administrative staff responsible for their support.

2.157 The review team explored documentation describing the research environment and communities that support postgraduate students, which described a wide range of discipline-specific as well as interdisciplinary research events provided by the Graduate School, the faculties and a number of well established University institutes. The Graduate VLE guides students to learning resources, including video accounts of students', supervisors' and senior researchers' experiences of the research degree process, past PhD Experience Conference content, guides to regulations and requirements, and research degree advice. Research students whom the review team met confirmed support from the

Graduate School in practical matters, the availability of laboratory space for science students, and library provision, including the postgraduate lounge. The students indicated that up to £2,000 a year was available to support research expenses and conference attendance.

2.158 The RDC appoints supervisory teams of at least two supervisors, nominated by the relevant department. Staff new to doctoral supervision are paired with a more experienced co-supervisor and are required to attend a series of training workshops. Supervisory meetings must occur at least 12 times a year and records are kept and monitored by the Director of the Graduate School. An online tracking system was operating for the first year at the time of the review, following successful piloting.

2.159 Students whom the review team met confirmed frequency and quality of supervisions. All research students are formally monitored every six months, using a mid-year assessment based on a structured discussion between student and supervisor(s), and a more formal annual monitoring procedure involving the student, both supervisors and an independent chairperson. At the end of the first year of registration the monitoring procedure is used to confirm students' achievement of an appropriate standard of work and to authorise their continuation into the second year.

2.160 At the start of their programmes research students undergo a Training Needs Analysis based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and then take training modules totalling 60 credits for doctoral programmes, 40 credits for M.Phil, and 20 credits for research master's programmes, which must be completed before students are permitted to submit their thesis. Students who accumulate 60 credits at Level 7 are awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Training. Specialist discipline-based training is provided through a wide range of modules and training activities. Credits are also awarded for research activities such as conference presentation, published academic papers, and participation in public engagement events. At the time of the team's visit the University was planning further enhancements of these processes following a periodic review of research training.

2.161 The Director of the Graduate School is responsible for approving the appointment of examiners. All viva voce examinations require the presence of a trained independent chair. The external research degree examiners are provided with a pack of guidelines and relevant Codes of Practice. Students receive guidance on the examination processes from the supervisors and from online guides.

2.162 Feedback from postgraduate research students is obtained using their supervision records, the half year and annual monitoring forms, the i-Graduate Student Barometer, the HEA Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and in-house module evaluation questionnaires. PRES results are analysed by the University's Enhancement Surveys Officer and distributed to academic areas. Students are permitted to request a change of supervisor at any time. A Graduate School student-staff committee began operation in October 2015.

2.163 The team concludes that the University's arrangements for the provision and management of research degrees meet the Expectation and the associated level of risk is low.

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

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.164 In reaching its judgements about the quality of learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.165 There are eleven Expectations in this area and all are met with a low level of risk. The review team identified two features of good practice and there are two recommendations and one affirmation.

2.166 The review team finds that the University has a strategic commitment to significant curriculum reform and considers as good practice the design, development and approval of programmes within the Curriculum 2016+ project, which has enhanced the embedding of employability into the curriculum and created new approaches to learning and teaching (Section B1). The two recommendations in this area are concerned with sections B6 and B9.

2.167 The first recommendation relates to the review team's finding that revisions to the University's appeal regulations had not been amended in the Appeal Wizard and were at variance with the revised regulations. The review team recommends that the University should ensure that all information available to students about the period for lodging academic appeals is accurate and consistent.

2.168 The review team's second recommendation is concerned with feedback on assessment. In meetings with students the team found that there is not a clear understanding of the University's guidelines determining that feedback on assessment should be provided within four semester weeks. In addition, the review team noted that there was inconsistency in the timing of feedback provision across the University. The team recommends that the University should ensure that all information available to students about the timescales for return of assessed work with feedback is accurate and consistent.

2.169 In addition, the review team makes an affirmation in this area in relation to Section B8. The review team is aware of the University's commitment to engaging students fully in monitoring and review and of its work with HUU to involve students more directly in QER activity. The review team affirms the steps taken to further engage students in the QER process (B8).

2.170 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the University **meets** UK expectations.

### **3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities**

**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 The University produces a diverse and comprehensive range of information about its higher education provision for prospective and current students, graduates, staff, collaborative partners, employers, stakeholders and the public. Its approach is to use a range of mechanisms to make this information available. This includes extensive use of the University's website, online resources and printed media, such as the University prospectus and subject pamphlets. In addition, there are events that include open days and widening participation events. The University's new draft strategic plan refers to the University's role as an anchor institution in the city, its local geography, and how it engages with local schools, collaborative partners and employers.

3.2 General information about the University is available on its website, with a range of visitor information, campus locations and directions. There are also policy documents, including the University's strategic plan, information on governance and management, University news, achievements and events. More specific aspects cover academic provision, regulations, and support for students and staff via dedicated web pages, for example the prospectus, accommodation, the library, and its international provision.

3.3 There is comprehensive information available for prospective students on recruitment, selection and admissions processes, with clear information for different applicants (for example undergraduate, postgraduate, and research degrees) to support students in making an informed decision. This includes information and guidance on course choice, application tracking, visa requirements, and availability of advice and support.

3.4 The information on admissions requirements and entry criteria provided for applicants includes information on University admissions, accreditation of prior learning and specific policies for subjects. There is a link to the separate website of Hull York Medical School (HYMS) for nursing and healthcare applicants. It provides applicants with relevant information regarding requirements and procedures. The University engages in a range of access to higher education initiatives and events to widen access to the University. These are run by the Student Recruitment Directorate and offer a programme of open days and applicant days. Information is also available on opportunities and support for students with disabilities.

3.5 The University provides information and support for students through multiple channels. This includes the provision of important information for students to support their learning, including the Student Charter and Feedback Charter, online Student Handbooks, module handbooks, the VLE, and information via the University's internal portal.

3.6 In addition, students and staff can access a range of information on the University's Regulations and Codes of Practice (including updates), University strategies (including learning and teaching), employability and comprehensive guidance and documentation for the Curriculum 2016+ and Transformation Programmes.

3.7 The University has procedures for the monitoring, updating and review of its information. Regulations and codes of practice are overseen by the Regulations, Codes and Processes Committee (RCPC), a subcommittee of University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and approved by Senate. The University Codes of Practice describe the expectations relating to the production of publicity and marketing.

3.8 Through e-Newsletters (for example Inspiring Change) the University provides information on learning and teaching developments and highlights successes, good practice and achievements and updates on key developments and achievements, including those from the University's Transformation Programme.

3.9 The University's comprehensive information, along with the mechanisms for updating, ensure that it is accurate, fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.10 The review team considered the wide range of published information and information, the University's website, and the extensive documentation for prospective students, current and graduating students, staff, collaborative partners, employers and the public. The team also met students, academic and professional support staff.

3.11 The review team met a range of students, including students on collaborative programmes, who commented favourably on their experience with regard to recruitment, selection and admission. Students also commented positively in meetings about the access to higher education events and the associated information and support available. Scarborough campus students also commented positively on the information that had helped them select to their courses, which had largely met their expectations.

3.12 In meetings with the review team the Scarborough transition was highlighted and it was recognised that there had been challenges in communication about the changes in 2014-15. The introduction of the Scarborough Transition Group, and the Principles for an Excellent Student Experience, to safeguard the experience of students completing their studies through until 2017 has improved both communication and linked investment.

3.13 Information for current students includes a comprehensive range of online and printed resources, as well as induction information. Programme handbooks provide an important reference point to regulations, (for example appeals and complaints, plagiarism and unfair practice, and academic referencing), student support and advice. Additional handbooks are provided to students and employers to support professional and placement learning and employability.

3.14 The VLE and other online resources are considered helpful by students as they provide access to a wide range of information and learning resources. Students commented on the variability of the use of the VLE on some modules.

3.15 The review team saw evidence of the review of the VLE, the positive engagement of students in shaping this development and the plans for a new system aligned to Curriculum 2016+ updated programmes. Students whom the review team met spoke positively about the comprehensive Student Course and Module Handbooks, the induction information and activities, the resources available on e-Bridge, the introduction of e-submission and feedback on assessments.

3.16 Completing students receive a certificate and higher education transcripts that meet the requirements of the European Diploma Supplement, and a code of practice is in place for managing transcript production for collaborative provision that supports the development and enhancement of the information for students. Examples include the review of the VLE, the development of an Appeals Wizard, Principles of an Excellent Student Experience,

enhancements to Student Placements and development of a Policy on the Transparency of Course Costs for Students.

3.17 Extensive information and support for staff is provided to foster and support excellent learning and teaching practice with clear and comprehensive regulations, codes of practice and implementation guides and leaflets available. These include the Strategic Plan, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy, the Student Charter, the Student Feedback Charter, the Retention Strategy, the Student Employability Strategy, the Office for Fair Access Agreement, the ICT Strategy and Implementation Plan, and the Quality and Standards Framework.

3.18 From meetings with staff during the review visit, there was evidence of this information being understood, kept under review and implemented.

3.19 There is specific guidance available for staff and students relating to student support staff roles, including the Student Success Advisers and Academic Support Tutors. This aids the consistency of support for students, and provides a valuable reference point for students and staff on the types of support available. In addition, the Course Representative Handbook provides comprehensive information to support effective engagement of students.

3.20 The review team meetings with staff and students confirmed their awareness and understanding of the information available from the University. Staff commented positively on the staff development, information and support available to them and the team found evidence of close partnership working across the University as part of the University's Transformation Programme.

3.21 The Expectation is therefore met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

## The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.22 In reaching its judgements on the quality of the information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The one Expectation in this area is met, with a low level of risk.

3.23 The University provides a comprehensive range of information about its higher education provision for the public, students, staff, collaborative partners, employers and other stakeholders. For prospective students full information and guidance is available on the University's programmes, recruitment, selection and admissions

3.24 The approach of the University is to deploy a broad range of communication media, including the University's website, VLE, printed materials including the prospectus and subject pamphlets, and events such as those for open days and widening participation.

3.25 There are procedures for the monitoring, updating and review of the published information with regulations and codes of practice overseen by the Regulations, Codes and Processes Committee. These ensure that the information is accurate and fit for purpose.

3.26 In meetings the review team received positive comments from students, who value the information provided by the University, including the VLE and other online resources. In addition, the review found team extensive information and support for staff to foster and support excellent learning and teaching practice.

3.27 The review team found that the information provided by the University of Hull about their higher education provision is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.28 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the University **meets** UK expectations.

## 4 Judgement: The 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 Through its 2011-15 Strategic Plan and Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2012-15, the University sets out its commitment to providing first class learning and teaching and an excellent student experience, founded on continuous enhancement of learning opportunities. The University is commended for its adoption and implementation of a strategic, transformational, institution-wide approach to enhancement known as the Transformation Programme. This comprises four interrelated, institutional strategic change programmes:

- the IT Transformation Journey, which was designed to enhance and innovate information systems, services and ICT
- the Academic Investment Initiative to shape the University's academic staff portfolio, emphasising support for staff in developing their teaching and research
- Curriculum 2016+, designed to review and reshape the University's entire portfolio of taught programmes
- the Student Experience Programme designed to improve the quality of the whole student journey from applicant to alumni.

4.2 There was clear evidence of close and effective partnership working between academic and professional support staff in driving these integrated strategic projects, with opportunities for staff, students and employers to contribute to the development and implementation of the initiatives.

4.3 As part of Curriculum 2016+, a comprehensive market intelligence review of programmes has been undertaken and new curriculum developments will be phased across 2016 and 2017 to ensure the attractiveness and appeal of programmes to students. The project also involves a redesign of curricula and pedagogy to meet student learning needs, involving stakeholders that include employers, PSRBs and students. Through this project, the University's entire portfolio is planned to be revalidated by January 2017.

4.4 An expectation of Curriculum 2016+ is that all programmes embody the innovative use of appropriate technology to enhance student learning, engagement and flexibility. The technology-enhanced learning team within LEAP is working closely with academic staff to enable them to make effective use of the new VLE in their learning and teaching, through central staff development sessions and bespoke support in response to requests from faculty staff. As part of a substrand of Curriculum 2016+, the University has engaged staff, students and HUU in a review of the VLE to determine and establish a new platform to support the refreshed portfolio of taught programmes.

4.5 Curriculum 2016+ has six key principles for curriculum design for the revised curriculum, highlighting the importance of discipline-specific and practical relevance when designing and enhancing the curriculum, pedagogy and student learning opportunities. All programmes are required to embed the Hull Graduate Attributes and employability in the core curriculum. Academic staff are supported in programme development and this new approach to curriculum design through online resources and a variety of staff development opportunities.



4.6 While the University has made significant progress with its Transformation Programme, the planned timescale for the projects meant that not all projects had reached completion at the time of the review visit. Outcomes that had been realised, however, include a significant transformation of the University's library to provide a light and contemporary flexible technology-enabled learning environment, in which there is a variety of learning spaces designed to meet different learner needs. The library now offers longer opening hours (24/7 hours in term-time and extended opening hours in the summer) and campus-wide, high capacity wireless networking has been delivered. Students whom the review team met at the review visit were very positive about the enhancements that the University has made to the library and wireless access.

4.7 The Transformation Programme is monitored and evaluated by a Transformation Board. A six-stage project management life cycle has been adopted, with a project closure report produced 12-18 months after completion of the project. Outcomes, benefits and effectiveness against the University's key performance indicators (KPIs) and key performance areas (KPIAs) are all considered. Funding from the Higher Education Academy's Vice-Chancellors' Strategic Excellence Initiative will enable methodologies and metrics to be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum enhancement activities.

4.8 ULTAC has responsibility for overseeing and implementing the quality enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment, for example the implementation of the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy (LTSES) and elements of the University's Transformation Programme.

4.9 The University is committed to working in partnership with HUU and the student body as a whole on continual enhancement of the student experience. Members of the University's Executive meet regularly with HUU Executive, and students engage with quality assurance and enhancement processes including curriculum and pedagogic design. On an annual basis, students submit Student Written Submissions (SWS) to ULTAC and Senate in which they outline the enhancements they would like to see based on a range of student feedback. Agreed enhancements from the SWS contribute to the University's annual Student Experience Action Plans, which are considered by ULTAC.

4.10 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) is responsible for, and drives, the University's strategic approach to, and implementation of, quality enhancement with support and enablement through the LEAP Team. This integrates the support for quality and academic practice. Members of the LEAP team are involved in external national groups and activities, and they undertake their own scholarly activities.

4.11 The LEAP team also works closely with HUU to ensure student engagement in relevant areas of activity and change. There is also close working between the LEAP team and the other professional support service teams (Estates, Library and Learning Innovation, Information and Communication Technology Directorate, Student Services and the Careers and Employability Service) to ensure delivery of a positive student experience. Regular meetings between the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Associate Deans and senior members of the LEAP team ensure a strategic approach to enhancement across the University. These meetings also provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and good practice.

4.12 New staff are appropriately inducted to the University, with established staff offered professional development in aspects of leadership, research and academic development. The LEAP Team acts as a central change management agency to drive and support a culture of enhancement in students' learning opportunities. It works at both faculty and University level to identify, discuss and take forward enhancement activities and initiatives at operational and strategic levels. Members of the LEAP team work closely with faculty staff, offering a range of support and guidance which includes one-to-one support on specific

issues raised by the faculty, central training sessions, 'drop-ins', paper-based resources and an online good practice repository.

4.13 In addition, LEAP makes available funding to support staff in innovating their practice through the Innovations in Student Learning Scheme, and in developing and enhancing their teaching practice through the *Pedagogic Development Fund*. Staff are encouraged to disseminate their findings at the University's Learning and Teaching Conference, through an Educational Enquiry Seminar series, and externally at national and international events and networks.

4.14 The LEAP team also has responsibility for coordinating the sharing and dissemination of good practice across the University and its partner institutions. This is achieved through a variety of means, including the University's Learning and Teaching Conferences which are held twice a year; the dissemination of research projects undertaken through the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice; workshops to share innovative practice, for example peer assessment and the Induction Toolkit; cross-institutional user groups such as the PebblePad User Group; and joint working with other institutions involving the national sharing of practice, including embedding enterprise in the curriculum.

4.15 The University adopts a thematic approach to enhancement, focusing on Student Employability in 2013-14 and Digital Literacies for 2015-16. Faculties and departments demonstrate how they have engaged in these enhancement themes through their annual QERs, with the University's Learning and Teaching conference also providing a forum for staff to engage with these themes.

4.16 In addition, the Federation of College (FoC) partners and key representatives from the University share innovative ideas, good practice, suggestions and advice, as well as identifying any areas for development and appropriate actions through Annual Partner Quality Enhancement Report (PQER) Panels. The elements of good practice from each PQER are collated into a single document circulated for further discussion to all FoC partners, faculties within the University and ULTAC. In 2015, the University launched a new Quality Enhancement Report Learning Initiative (QERLI) to provide the opportunity for cross-faculty exchange of good practice. Materials from the event are made available to all staff, whether they were able to attend the event or not.

4.17 The University sets out to attract and retain talent, offering progression and promotion through both a Teaching and Scholarship pathway and a Teaching and Research pathway. Staff on teaching and research contracts are expected to reflect upon and develop their pedagogic skills, and achieve Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) status within two years of promotion to Senior Lecturer. The University offers its staff the opportunity to undertake an HEA-accredited CPD scheme, Disciplinary Approaches to Research and Teaching Excellence, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice. Teaching excellence is recognised and rewarded through Student-Led Teaching Awards which have been in place for the last five years, with comprehensive support, guidance and mentoring for National Teaching Fellow (NTFS) applicants. The University rewards success in NTFS and other national and international teaching award schemes through funding to support attendance at international pedagogic conferences.

4.18 The team considered a range of documentation supplied by the University, with confirmation for triangulation obtained through meetings held with University staff and students during the review team visit.

4.19 The University clearly adopts a strategic, systematic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities. The planned Transformation Programme, integrating the four key areas of IT transformation, academic investment, Curriculum 2016+, and the student

experience programme, is well underway and starting to deliver beneficial outcomes for students. The University offers staff a good mix of appropriate staff development opportunities and there are a number of effective mechanisms in place for their dissemination.

4.20 The review team considered the strategic transformational approach to cross-institutional enhancement, which involves effective partnership working between professional support and academic teams through a series of integrated projects, as **good practice** and the University is commended in this area.

4.21 The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low

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

## The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.22 In reaching its judgements on the enhancement of student learning opportunities the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The one Expectation in this area is met, with a low level of risk.

4.23 There is one feature of good practice in this area and no recommendations or affirmations. The review team considered the strategic transformational approach to cross-institutional enhancement, which involves effective partnership working between professional support and academic teams through a series of integrated projects, to be good practice and this is reflected in the associated concluding judgement.

4.24 The review team saw clear evidence of the University's commitment to continuous enhancement of learning opportunities through the adoption and implementation of its Transformation Programme. This is a strategic institution-wide approach to enhancement with four interrelated strategic change programmes focusing on IT transformation, academic investment, Curriculum 2016+, and the student experience programme. These are guided and informed by the 2011-15 Strategic Plan and Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2012-15.

4.25 The effective implementation of the Transformation Programme was evident to the review team in the strong working partnership between academic and professional support staff and the contributions of students and employers.

4.26 Responsibility for coordinating the sharing and dissemination of good practice across the University and its partner institutions is with the LEAP Team. The team achieves this through processes and activities that include workshops to share innovative practice, the University's Learning and Teaching Conferences, dissemination of research projects, cross-institutional user groups, and joint working with other institutions.

4.27 The University adopts a thematic approach to enhancement, focusing on Student Employability in 2013-14 and Digital Literacies for 2015-16. Faculties and departments demonstrate engagement with these themes through annual Quality Enhancement Reports.

4.28 The review team found that the University has a strategic and systematic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities, which is reflected in the associated feature of good practice and the team's conclusion that the enhancement of student learning opportunities is **commended**.

## Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

### Findings

4.29 The University has a clear strategic focus on student employability, as articulated in its Student Employability Strategy, with an ambition to strengthen collaborative links with employers and alumni and to extend the availability of work related opportunities, internships (both home and overseas), work placements and voluntary opportunities, both within and external to the programme of study. Its strategic ambitions to develop the Hull Graduate, and to enable enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability skills, are also articulated in the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy.

4.30 The University sets targets and KPIs for employability and graduate employment, with ULTAC approving and monitoring the University's approach. The University's Institutional Performance Group also monitors Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) performance. DLHE statistics increased to 95 per cent for 2013-14 home undergraduates in work or further study six months after graduation.

4.31 Student employability was the University's enhancement theme in 2013-14 and through the Curriculum 2016+ project, all programmes are required to embed the Hull Graduate Attributes and employability in both the core curriculum and in specialist, professionally-based modules. This is tested as part of the programme development consent process. Students can also undertake a co-curricular Hull Employability Award to complement their degree and to recognise their graduate attribute development.

4.32 There is a dedicated Careers and Employability Service (CES) which has recently been expanded to scale up the offer for students and include a new Employer Engagement team. The team works closely with regional, national and international employers to create opportunities for students. The CES team has worked with academic and other areas across the University to engage more students with curricular and co-curricular activities.

4.33 Opportunities for graduate-level work (together with example case studies), internships and volunteering to students via a central online opportunities website are made available through CES and at local level through faculties. In addition, CES organises employer presentations, recruitment fairs (physical and online), placement events and a series of interactive workshops, mock interviews, and practice assessment centres.

4.34 The University's Volunteering Scheme is run by HUU, with one of the longest established student-led volunteering groups in the UK (HUSSO), which was formed in 1961. Students are able to develop a wide range of employability skills through their involvement with HUU activities and hence HUU works closely with CES.

4.35 There is a good range of employers who visit the campus each year. The sharing of labour market information between faculty staff and other University teams, including CES, the Enterprise Centre and Faculty Business Development teams, benefits students and graduates. There are also a number of fairs and networking events led by the academic areas. Student Careers Ambassadors are trained to help the CES Team in running institutional events, such as the annual Graduate Recruitment Fair and local employability activities, in their academic areas.

4.36 Nominated CES advisers support each academic area, with the CES team providing a variety of support and guidance to all students to prepare them effectively for the world of work. This includes one-to-one guidance, presentations in lectures, small group work, employer events and a set of relevant resources and online careers planning

resources. This team monitors the number of students that engage, and feedback data suggest that the majority of students are satisfied with the service they receive from CES.

4.37 Support is also provided to students by CES before they register with the University. The team offers pre-entry advice and guidance to prospective students and, with Office for Fair Access (OFFA) funding, promotes and supports student access to internships and jobs. The University promotes internationalisation and the integration of UK and international students through Go Connect. This initiative provides students with the opportunity to develop and transfer their employability skills into the world of work. Alumni are able to continue to make use of CES as a lifetime service for all graduates.

4.38 The Skills team within Library and Learning Innovation works with academic staff and the CES team to help students develop their graduate skills. Students whom the review team met were very positive about the support they receive from the University for careers and employability, citing placement opportunities and the opportunity to reflect on skills as good development opportunities.

4.39 The University has excellent links with employers, providing a ready supply chain of good students and graduates to businesses. Employers whom the team met at the review visit valued the new ideas and innovations that Hull students and graduates brought to their businesses, and described the University's reputation for producing excellent graduates.

4.40 Students have the opportunity as part of their studies to undertake an accredited undergraduate elective module or postgraduate module in Careers Management Skills. As part of the University's free elective scheme, students are also able to undertake various enterprise and business modules.

4.41 The importance of entrepreneurship is recognised in the University's Student Employability Strategy, with the Enterprise Centre running sessions for students and academics, contributing to learning and teaching events, such as the University's Learning and Teaching Conference, and providing incubation facilities to students, graduates and other locally interested parties.

4.42 The Enterprise Centre is considered an anchor location for start-up advice, and hosts a city-wide entrepreneurs group, For Entrepreneurs Only, a boot camp, and a range of other entrepreneurship events. The University is a member of Hull's Centre for Digital Innovation (C4DI), which is responsible for driving business innovation, from which the University derives benefits for both students and academics. Excellence in this area was recognised in 2014 by the Guardian University of the Year Award for Business Partnership, and by shortlisting in the same year for the Times Higher Education Award for Knowledge Transfer.

4.43 The University has made substantial investment in internships in the last two years, which has enabled a greater uptake locally and nationally in the last academic year. A strength of the internship scheme is the opportunity offered to undertake a three-month long internship overseas to support the University's internationalisation agenda.

4.44 A new online mentoring scheme launched in 2013-14, The Hull Bridge Mentoring Scheme, enables any student from year two onwards to be mentored by a graduate in their area of their career interest. This has proved a successful initiative, with a doubling in the number of participants mentored by employers and alumni, and very positive feedback from students and employers. University alumni are also involved in presenting to students and the local business community as well as offering internships and graduate job opportunities.

4.45 The review team concludes that the University is committed to providing strong and effective support for students in developing their employability skills and gaining relevant work experience.

## 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 30-33 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/assuring-standards-and-quality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality)

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

### 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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