

**Outcomes from institutional audit
Arrangements for international
students**

Second series



Sharing good practice

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ISBN 978 1 84482 700 8

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Summary

Consideration of the 59 institutional audit reports published from December 2004 to August 2006 confirms the conclusions drawn from information in the 70 reports published to November 2004 that, overall, institutions have established suitable arrangements to recruit, induct and support international students.

Students are central to the concerns of institutional audit and to the audit process itself, although in the audits this paper is based on there was no requirement to report separately on arrangements made for the support of international, overseas or non-UK students. However, descriptions and analyses of arrangements for their support can be found in 90 per cent of the 59 reports published from December 2004 to August 2006 and are, in many cases, associated with features of good practice. It is significant that the reports identify considerably more features of good practice in this area than recommendations for action. In addition, the international students who met audit teams were, almost without exception, appreciative of the quality of academic and personal support made available to them.

Overall, the audit reports show that institutions are aware of the substantial learning and cultural issues involved in recruiting large numbers of international students, many of whose first language is not English, and are adopting strategic approaches to their support. Many reports describe how the support offered to international students is organised, and indicate that institutions have identified the importance of a coordinated approach to enhance support mechanisms at both central and programme level. The reports contain much information about arrangements for the orientation and induction of international students and about the support offered to those whose first language is not English. Many of these were endorsed by audit teams.

The provision of accurate information both before and after arrival is particularly important in the case of international students. The reports reveal that many institutions send international students pre-arrival packs and also make relevant information available on their websites. In addition, dedicated handbooks or guides are frequently produced for international students to supplement other student handbooks. In general, international students reported no difficulty in accessing information on their programmes of study or on the support available to them.

Many reports describe the specialist academic and personal support made available to international students at institutional level by international offices or advisers, or by members of academic or support staff at school or departmental level. In several instances, institutions' statistical analysis of student progression and achievement has led to the provision of additional academic support and to special representation and feedback arrangements for international students, leading to enhancements in personal support.

Overall, it is clear that institutions with substantial numbers of international students appreciate the importance of meeting their expectations and providing specialist academic and personal support. There is evidence that, in anticipation of growth in the numbers of students from overseas, institutions have been keeping support services under review in order to enhance the experience of international students.

Preface

An objective of institutional audit is 'to contribute, in conjunction with other mechanisms, to the promotion and enhancement of high quality in teaching and learning'. To provide institutions and other stakeholders with access to timely information on the findings of its institutional audits, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) produces short working papers that describe features of good practice and summarise recommendations from the audit reports. Since 2005 these have been published under the generic title *Outcomes from institutional audit* (hereafter, *Outcomes...*). The first series of these papers drew on the findings of audit reports published between 2003 and November 2004. This paper is based on the findings of institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006.

A feature of good practice in institutional audit is considered to be a process, a practice, or a way of handling matters which, in the context of the particular institution, is improving, or leading to the improvement of, the management of quality and/or academic standards, and learning and teaching. *Outcomes...* papers are intended to provide readers with pointers to where features of good practice relating to particular topics can be located in the published audit reports. Each *Outcomes...* paper therefore identifies the features of good practice in individual reports associated with the particular topic and their location in the Main report. Although all features of good practice are listed, in the interests of brevity not all are discussed in this paper. In the initial listing in paragraph 6, the first reference is to the numbered or bulleted lists of features of good practice at the end of each institutional audit report, the second to the relevant paragraphs in Section 2 of the Main report. Throughout the body of this paper, references to features of good practice in the institutional audit reports give the institution's name and the paragraph number from Section 2 of the Main report.

It should be emphasised that the features of good practice mentioned in this paper should be considered in their proper institutional context, and that each is perhaps best viewed as a stimulus to reflection and further development rather than as a model for emulation. A note on the topics identified for this second series of *Outcomes...* papers can be found at Appendix 3 (page 16).

As noted above, this second series of *Outcomes...* papers is based on the 59 institutional audit reports published by August 2006, and the titles of papers are in most cases the same as their counterparts in the first series of *Outcomes...* Like the first series of *Outcomes...* papers, those in the second series are perhaps best seen as 'work in progress'. Although QAA retains copyright in the contents of the *Outcomes...* papers they can be freely downloaded from the QAA website and cited, with acknowledgement for educational and research purposes.

Introduction and general overview

1 This paper is based on a detailed consideration of the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 (see Appendix 1, page 12). A note of the methodology used to produce this and other papers in this second *Outcomes...* series can be found in Appendix 4 (page 18).

2 Students are central to the concerns of institutional audit and to the audit process itself, although in the audits this paper is based on there was no requirement for audit teams to report separately on arrangements made for the support of international, overseas or non-UK students. This may explain why there were few specific references to international students in the features of good practice identified in the audit reports or in the recommendations for action made by audit teams. The fact that references to international students occurred, however, in 90 per cent of the 59 audit reports indicates both the growing numbers of students from overseas recruited by institutions and the interest of audit teams in the arrangements made for their support. It is significant that most references to international students occurred in the sections dealing with personal support and guidance (60 per cent of the reports); academic guidance, support and supervision (41 per cent); and students' experience of published information and other information available to them (16 per cent). There were also frequent references to international students in the reports of discipline audit trails.

3 In some institutions, mainly in London, international students made up between 20 and 30 per cent of the total student population at the time of the audit. One large institution, with 40 per cent non-UK nationals among its students, considered that international students had become part of the mainstream student body. Other institutions with large numbers of international students were reported to be attempting to integrate them into the social and intellectual life of the institution, while recognising that they required special care and support. Even relatively small institutions were recruiting international students in large numbers. In one case, 600 international students from 67 countries made up nearly 10 per cent of total full-time equivalent students at the time of the audit. In another, 600 students out of a total of nearly 5,000 full-time equivalents came from overseas. In at least one institution, over one-third of the total number of postgraduates were international students. Another institution had found that master's programmes in management and business attracted large numbers of international students.

4 Several institutions with large numbers of international students were planning to expand numbers even further, sometimes as part of an international strategy. One was intending, as part of its international strategy, to review its student support services to ensure that they were appropriate to the needs and expectations of projected annual increases in international student numbers. Another, in addition to developing an international strategy, considered that a more holistic approach to supporting international students was still required. One institution had set up an International Strategy Group to ensure that a plan to increase international student numbers was properly reflected in the provision of support, as well as in the teaching and skills of staff. In one institution, a projected increase in the proportion of international students from 14 to 27 per cent, as part of a substantial growth in total

student numbers, led the audit team to focus on the likely impact of this growth, particularly on students' teaching and learning experience and the provision of pastoral and academic support for all students.

5 In all institutional audits there were opportunities for audit teams to meet students, including international students, during briefing meetings and discipline audit trails. Over half of the 59 audit reports contained specific references to meetings with international students, in some cases to deal with matters relating to support raised in the self-evaluation document or student written submission prepared for the audit. For these reasons, the reports contained a considerable amount of material relating to international students that, in many cases, contributed to features of good practice or, much less frequently, to recommendations for action.

Features of good practice

6 Consideration of the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 shows the following features of good practice relating to international students. The reports included arrangements that, though not always explicitly identified as features of good practice, were noted as more than adequate, or were regarded with approval by the international students met by the audit team:

- the responsiveness of the University to its students, manifest in the various means by which it ensures that the student voice is heard and in its orientation programme for international students [The Queen's University of Belfast, paragraph 260, bullet 2; paragraphs 86-7, 115 and 121]
- the institutional focus on the development of guidance and support for students, including international students [University of Newcastle upon Tyne, paragraph 269 iv; paragraph 139]
- the priority given by the University to the quality of the student experience, particularly international students [University of Northumbria at Newcastle, paragraph 254 v; paragraph 132]
- the integrated international strategy, with wide-ranging implications for the composition of the student body, the nature of the curriculum and the way in which it is delivered and the development of strategic international partnerships, as indicative of UCL's ability to effect strategic change [University College London, paragraph 153 i; paragraphs 30-1]
- the operation of Welcome Week and mentoring which support the induction of new students [Staffordshire University, paragraph 251 v; paragraphs 92, 144 and 177]
- the support provided for [international] students in the context of the University's culture of equality and diversity [University of East London, paragraph 256 vii; paragraphs 126 and 136]
- use of Teaching and Learning Fellowships that are focused on particular institutional priorities and targets, for example, retention and for building community links. They are used effectively in the development of 'reach out' activity as well as internal academic matters and are well integrated into the institution [University of Sunderland, paragraph 206 ii; paragraph 96]

- the strongly collegial culture that underpins excellent academic and personal support for students, [including...the provision of a bridging programme to help international students to make the transition to higher education] [Liverpool Hope University, paragraph 236 v; paragraphs 120, 145 to 147, 153, 169, 182 and 185]
- the proactive approach taken to the identification of support requirements for international students [University of Bolton, paragraph 196; bullet 6, paragraph 122]
- the support provided to students [including international students] prior to, during and subsequent to their placements [Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies, paragraph 229 ii; paragraphs 137-8].

Themes

7 This part of the paper focuses on themes emerging from references relating to international students in the 59 institutional audit reports published from December 2004 to August 2006. They can be grouped into the following broad areas:

- organisation of support
- information
- orientation and induction
- English language support
- academic and personal support
- representation and feedback arrangements.

Organisation of support

8 The audit reports revealed a variety of ways in which support for international students could be organised, depending on the size of the institution and the number of students recruited. In some institutions, international strategy groups or international student working groups oversaw the particular needs of international students [The Queen's University Belfast, paragraph 119]. One institution had established an international student experience group following a recommendation in a continuation audit report to take forward plans to coordinate activities relating to the international student experience. In another, the recognition of a need to enhance support for international students had led to a benchmarking exercise against provision in similar institutions, a review of support carried out by an international students working group, and identification of the need for an international students adviser. Meanwhile another institution, to supplement the work of its Centre for International Education (a central location providing support for international students) had used its teaching fellowship scheme to explore particular issues affecting international students, in order to design and implement mechanisms for supporting them [University of Sunderland, paragraph 111].

9 In smaller institutions, or those with fewer international students, a single international students' officer or adviser was often a satisfactory way to provide expert help with such matters as welfare, immigration law, asylum and visas. In this context, one international student adviser was reported to have provided prompt and effective support for those of the institution's international students who were affected by the 2004 tsunami.

10 In most institutions, however, responsibility for the support of international students resided with a section of the relevant student support services. In particular, most institutions with significant numbers of international students had established separate international offices or centres, sometimes with combined responsibility for home students studying abroad. It appeared to be less common for international offices to combine recruitment and support responsibilities, though with a rapidly increasing number of international students, the main focus of one institution's international student advisory service had shifted from pastoral care to providing accurate, reliable and timely information to enquirers. In another institution, an international office had been established to take over recruitment and admission activities from faculties and thus provide a more consistent and equitable support service for international students at the recruitment stage.

11 Central support services in the form of international offices or officers were frequently supplemented by dedicated local support from advisers or coordinators within schools and departments. In one institution with a large number of international students, all academic departments were required to have at least one member of staff responsible for the needs of international students. In the course of the relevant discipline audit trails, students in this institution commented favourably on the way in which departmental international student coordinators provided academic, social and personal support and liaised helpfully with the international office. Another audit report noted that an institution's business school, where the largest number of international students were based, had appointed its own international student coordinator, to work alongside the institution's central international student adviser.

12 In several institutions, support provided by the students' union supplemented that offered through central or other institutional services. In one institution, for example, the audit report noted that students' union officers provided support on welfare matters particularly affecting international students. In another, a student advice centre operated by the students' union provided the only point of contact for visa advice in the institution. Less formal bodies could also provide effective support. Examples included the International Society in one institution, which consultants had identified as performing valuable work [University of Bolton, paragraph 122], and the International Students Society in another, which had been instrumental in getting the institution to set up a dedicated hardship fund.

13 While noting the variety of ways in which support for international students was organised, the audit reports frequently drew attention to the importance of integrating support systems and keeping them under review. In one of the few recommendations explicitly relating to international students, an institution where low progression rates and English-language problems were giving rise to concern was asked to consider the desirability of 'developing a more concerted approach to identifying and addressing the particular needs and expectations of international students'. Another institution was encouraged, as it developed an international strategy, to monitor the performance of international students to assure itself of the consistency of the student experience. One report identified as a feature of good

practice an intention to develop a more holistic approach to supporting international students and a commitment to keeping provision under review in the interests of quality enhancement [University of Bolton, paragraph 122]. Another institution had put in place a process of continual review to ensure that staff were meeting the specific needs of international students, and a staff development programme to support their attempts to do so.

Information

14 In the case of international students, the provision of accurate information before arrival was seen as particularly important. Although such students in one institution were provided with supplementary information both before arrival and after registration, the student written submission expressed the view that, as it was difficult to describe how rural and small some of the sites were, international students could 'find the reality of the [institution] quite a shock in terms of its location', which might affect their ability to settle into academic work. Another report cited comments in the relevant student written submission to the effect that some international students considered that there was a 'distinct lack of information to prepare them for the cultural differences they were likely to experience'. One report noted that students made negative comments to the audit team about the accuracy of information made available to international students by agents in their home countries acting on behalf of the institution. In this case, the audit team went to some lengths to satisfy itself that the institution was doing all it could to ensure that the agents acting on its behalf were given comprehensive official information and guidelines on their responsibilities. International students in another institution were found to have received appropriate information either by personal contacts in their home countries or through the institution's website.

15 In one institution, following consultation with students, a review of prospectuses had led to improved presentation of information for international students. Another institution had taken the step of publishing its overseas prospectus in both English and Chinese. A number of audit reports noted that institutions sent international students a pre-arrival pack with information on matters including visas, travel directions, payment of fees and English language support [University of Newcastle upon Tyne, paragraph 142; University of Bolton, paragraph 122]. In others, the same sort of information was available on sections of the website dedicated to international students [Liverpool Hope University, paragraph 120].

16 Most institutions with substantial numbers of international students provided handbooks or guides to supplement student handbooks. Several audit reports noted that these handbooks for international students contained comprehensive and relevant information. Although students in one institution suggested that additional information for international students - particularly on assessment - would be helpful, in general international students reported no difficulty in accessing information on their programmes or the support available to them. They were particularly appreciative of the information available on institutional and departmental websites [Liverpool Hope University, paragraph 120].

Induction and orientation

17 Institutions clearly appreciated that international students required more extensive induction than home students, and that early contacts and careful orientation enabled them to settle more quickly and gave them the confidence to seek any further support they might need. One recently established international office had introduced a programme of seminars for applicants in their home countries, and had assembled a team of students to act as 'friendly contacts' for overseas applicants. One institution which intended to double its number of international students had plans, informed by a focus group of current international students, to ensure that new arrivals were sufficiently well prepared through the curriculum of their home institution and supported on arrival for the transition to the UK style of living and learning. Another had provided a bridging programme for international students to help them to make the transition to study in higher education [Liverpool Hope University, paragraph 120].

18 Several institutions offered international students help with travel arrangements, and some provided a 'meet and greet' arrangement on arrival in the UK [University of Northumbria at Newcastle, paragraph 132]. One institution, having identified good practice in its International Office's provision of a central enquiry point during the first week of the session to support international students, had extended a similar arrangement to all its new students. Several institutions offered help with finding suitable accommodation, and at least one guaranteed international students places in halls of residence in their first year [University of Northumbria at Newcastle, paragraph 132].

19 Nearly all institutions with substantial numbers of international students provided separate or extended induction and orientation arrangements. These ranged in length from three days to two weeks and sometimes combined informal welcomes and social occasions with more formal induction events tailored to the particular needs of international students. In one institution, a group of international students expressed appreciation of an extended welcome week in advance of the usual welcome week arranged for other students. In addition to this, the special arrangements made if international students had difficulty in arriving on time contributed to identifying the institution's induction arrangements as a feature of good practice [Staffordshire University, paragraph 92]. At another institution, the audit team heard that students regarded the induction programme for international students, which was provided in addition to the welcome and orientation event for all students, as a particularly valuable service. The institution's responsiveness to its students - manifested in the orientation arrangements for international students among other things - was identified as a feature of good practice [The Queen's University Belfast, paragraphs 115 and 260].

English language support

20 Most institutions accepted that specialist language support was essential for international students whose first language was not English, and the audit reports illustrated several different ways of delivering it. Some institutions required all students whose first language was not English to undergo an English language diagnostic test. The support offered by a Learner Development Unit in one institution included a foundation certificate in English for Academic Purposes, which allowed students to

undertake preparatory work for their chosen programmes while studying to reach the required standard in English language proficiency. Several institutions provided pre-sessional language courses for students who had not met entry requirements, and ongoing support such as summer schools and workshops in academic English skills [University of Northumbria at Newcastle upon Tyne, paragraph 132]. One report noted good practice in the nature and scope of the support provided in English for academic purposes, including the embedding of English language in business modules, which staff saw as a significant contribution to improving the student experience.

21 International offices organised English language support in some institutions, while large institutions with significant numbers of international students were able to provide appropriate language support by means of specialist units and centres [University of Northumbria at Newcastle, paragraph 132]. One British Council-accredited English language teaching unit offered tuition to international students who were already registered with the institution or hoping to enter it. In another institution, an English language support unit located in the international office provided flexible and appropriate forms of language training for international students.

22 For smaller, specialist institutions, the provision of English language support could present a challenge. One such institution had set high entrance targets in English language, partly as a consequence of not being able to offer in-house English language support. However, its international students could take part in informal 'buddying' arrangements with other students and benefit from remedial English classes offered by staff. One small institution acknowledged that English language was an issue for some of its postgraduate students. The audit report encouraged this institution to explore ways of strengthening English language support as its postgraduate activities expanded and changed. Another small institution with increasing numbers of international postgraduate students was invited to keep under review the suitability of arrangements for specialist English language support. This support was currently only available to postgraduate research students at a neighbouring university.

Academic and personal support

23 In the discipline audit trails, audit teams met departmental or school-based members of staff with the remit of supporting international students, or were told about the nature of additional support offered to international students [University of Newcastle upon Tyne, paragraph 142]. One audit report noted that faculties with significant numbers of international students had developed support mechanisms to supplement those available centrally, including study skills, help with English language, personal support and social activities to aid integration. In the same institution, one faculty had appointed learning support tutors from the same ethnic groups as international students, 'to ensure a culturally emphatic support service and to provide a role model for these students'. In another institution, a senior member of staff in one school was 'an identified central focus for overseas students'. In conjunction with central support units, this institution had also introduced in-sessional language support and a first-year study-skills course for international students. In an institution whose organisation of placement activity in general was identified as a feature of good practice, international students who met the audit team mentioned the excellent back-up they received while on placement, and 'spoke with conviction about a sense of "feeling safe"' [Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies, paragraph 138].

24 In some cases, statistical analysis of student achievement in modules had led to the provision of additional support. One audit report noted, in the context of a particular discipline audit trail, that evidence of poor performance by international students in one module had resulted in its modification. Another report commented that a department had put in place additional support mechanisms following identification of the differing levels of achievement of international students. In another institution, international students who had been identified as achieving less well in a particular module were offered an extended bridging induction 'to enhance their learning in the subject identified as particularly difficult for them'. Following an admission that programme-level support for international students could be variable - despite a central learning support team's work with students and programme teams to develop the skills for effective learning - one report encouraged the relevant institution to continue monitoring international student performance, to assure itself of the consistency of the student experience.

25 This set of audit reports contained some information on support provided specifically for postgraduate students. In one institution, a department had developed a pre-master's certificate as one of a series of additional support mechanisms for international students. Prompt, constructive feedback on assessed work might be more than usually important for international taught postgraduate students, as an indication of what was expected of work at UK master's level. In one case, following concerns expressed in the student written submission about late or poor-quality feedback, the audit report encouraged the institution to take more robust steps to ensure that feedback to international postgraduate students on assessed work was timely and constructive.

26 The reports contained few specific references to international postgraduate research students, apart from increases in the numbers recruited in several institutions and the need, noted above, to offer appropriate English language support. In one institution, however, international postgraduate research students who met an audit team were very appreciative of the quality of supervision and the support they received from the international office.

27 In a number of institutions, specialist personal support for international students was mainly the responsibility of international advisers or the staff of international offices. One dean of international students, who was also director of the relevant institution's international office, dealt with matters particularly affecting international students, such as student welfare, visas, English language tuition, study skills, induction and communication before arrival in the UK. An international liaison office in another institution provided special support, including a visa renewal scheme and advice on immigration and asylum matters. In addition to the usual range of services, the international office in another institution offered a permanent 'drop-in' service for international students. The training for wardens of halls of residence in one institution included awareness of the special needs of international students. In an institution whose proactive approach to identifying support requirements for international students was identified as a feature of good practice, international students with disabilities were identified and counselled specifically about the cultural differences that might prevent them seeking the extra support to which they were entitled [University of Bolton, paragraph 122].

Representation and feedback arrangements

28 Only a few of the audit reports commented on separate arrangements for the representation of international students, or on arrangements for collecting feedback from them. There was only one instance of international students expressing concern to an audit team that they were not specifically represented at institutional level. In this case, the institution was invited to ensure that international students were adequately represented, particularly as it planned to expand their numbers.

29 There were occasional references in the audit reports to international student committees or forums, or to international student representatives on students' union councils. One institution had established an International Student Forum, with international student representatives. This forum was designed 'to promote a positive experience for international students from the enquiry stage to graduation and to promote awareness among staff and students of the cultural differences, needs and contributions of international students'. In other institutions, matters reported to have been raised by student representatives on committees at central and programme level included the availability of library books for international students over holiday periods and the need for more financial assistance for some international students.

Conclusions

30 The information from the 59 institutional audit reports published between December 2004 and August 2006 confirms the conclusions drawn from information in the 70 reports published to November 2004. Overall, institutions with substantial numbers of international students recognise that there can be substantial learning and cultural issues for these students and appreciate the importance of providing specialist academic and personal support. The reports also provide further evidence that, in anticipation of further growth in the numbers of students from overseas, institutions have been developing international strategies and keeping support services under review.

31 Almost without exception, the international students who met audit teams were satisfied with the information provided to them before and after their arrival in the UK. They were also appreciative of the extent and quality of the academic and personal support made available to them.

Appendix 1 - The institutional audit reports

Note

In the period covered by these papers a number of institutions underwent a variety of scrutiny procedures for taught degree-awarding powers, university title and research degree-awarding powers. Reports of the individual scrutiny processes were provided to QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree-Awarding Powers, and its Board of Directors, and formed the basis for advice to the Privy Council on the applications made by the respective institutions.

In most cases the scrutiny processes also provided information which, in the form of a bespoke report, QAA accepted as the equivalent of an institutional audit report. Only those reports which conform to the general pattern of the institutional audit reports are included in the list below.

2004-05

City University

Cranfield University

University of Hull

University of Leicester

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

University of Nottingham

The Queen's University Belfast

University of Surrey

University of Ulster

Goldsmiths College ,University of London

Queen Mary, University of London

Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (Royal Holloway, University of London)

University of London

University College London

Birkbeck College, University of London

Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (Imperial College London)

St George's Hospital Medical School

University of Derby

De Montfort University

University of Gloucestershire

University of Hertfordshire
Sheffield Hallam University
University of Huddersfield
Kingston University
London Metropolitan University
Leeds Metropolitan University
Liverpool John Moores University
University of Luton¹
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Oxford Brookes University
University of Plymouth
Staffordshire University
London South Bank University
University of Sunderland
University of Teesside
University of East London
University of the West of England, Bristol
University of Westminster
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College²
Canterbury Christ Church University College³
University of Chester
Liverpool Hope University
University College Winchester⁴
Henley Management College
Harper Adams University College
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
American InterContinental University - London

¹ Now the University of Bedfordshire

² Now Buckinghamshire New University

³ Now Canterbury Christ Church University

⁴ Now the University of Winchester

2005-06

University of Manchester

Courtauld Institute of Art

Heythrop College

University of London External System

London School of Economics and Political Science

University of Bolton

Thames Valley University

University of Central England in Birmingham⁵

University of Worcester

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Dartington College of Arts⁶

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

⁵ Now Birmingham City University

⁶ Now part of the University College Falmouth

Appendix 2 - Reports on specialist institutions

2004-05

Birkbeck College, University of London

Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (Imperial College London)

St George's Hospital Medical School

Henley Management College

Harper Adams University College

Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

American InterContinental University - London

2005-06

Courtauld Institute of Art

Heythrop College

University of London External System

London School of Economics and Political Science

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Dartington College of Arts

The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Appendix 3 - Titles of *Outcomes from institutional audit papers, Series 2*

In most cases, *Outcomes...* papers will be no longer than 20 sides of A4. Projected titles of *Outcomes...* papers in the second series are listed below in provisional order of publication.

The first series of papers can be found on QAA's website at www.qaa.ac.uk/enhancement

Title

- Institutions' frameworks for managing quality and academic standards
- Progression and completion statistics
- Learning support resources (including virtual learning environments)
- Assessment of students
- Work-based and placement learning, and employability
- Programme monitoring arrangements
- Arrangements for international students
- Institutions' work with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- Recruitment and admission of students
- External examiners and their reports
- Collaborative provision in the institutional audit reports
- Institutions' arrangements to support widening participation and access to higher education
- Institutions' support for e-learning
- Specialist institutions
- Student representation and feedback
- Academic guidance, support and supervision, and personal support and guidance
- Staff support and development arrangements
- Subject benchmark statements
- The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Programme specifications
- Arrangements for combined, joint and multidisciplinary honours degrees programmes
- The adoption and use of learning outcomes

Validation and approval of new provision, and its periodic review

The self-evaluation document in institutional audit

The contribution of the student written submission to institutional audit

Institutions' intentions for enhancement

Series 2: concluding overview

Appendix 4 - Methodology

The analysis of the institutional audit reports uses the headings set out in Annex H of the *Handbook for institutional audit: England (2002)* to subdivide the Summary, Main report and Findings sections of the audit reports into broad areas. An example from the Main report is 'The institution's framework for managing quality and standards, including collaborative provision'.

For each published report, the text is taken from the report published on QAA's website and converted to plain text format. The resulting files are checked for accuracy and coded into sections following the template used to construct the institutional audit reports. In addition, the text of each report is tagged with information providing the date the report was published and some basic characteristics of the institution ('base data'). The reports are then introduced into a qualitative research software package, QSR N6[®]. The software provides a wide range of tools to support indexing and searching and allows features of interest to be coded for further investigation.

An audit team's judgements, its identification of features of good practice, and its recommendations appear at two points in an institutional audit report: the Summary and at the end of the Findings. It is only in the latter, however, that cross references to the paragraphs in the Main report are to be found, and it is here that the grounds for identifying a feature of good practice, offering a recommendation and making a judgement are set out. These cross references are used to locate features of good practice and recommendations to the particular sections of the report to which they refer.

Individual *Outcomes...* papers are compiled by QAA staff and experienced institutional auditors. To assist in compiling the papers, reports produced by QSR N6[®] are made available to authors to provide a broad picture of the overall distribution of features of good practice and recommendations in particular areas, as seen by the audit teams.

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