QAA

Institute of Education

December 2009

Annex to the report

Contents

Introduction

A team of auditors from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) visited Institute of Education from 16 March to 20 March 2009 to carry out an Institutional audit. The purpose of the 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 College offers.

Outcomes of the Institutional audit

As a result of its investigations, the audit team's view of Institute of Education is that:

- confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards that it offers

- confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Institutional approach to quality enhancement

The audit found that the Institute has a comprehensive range of activities which constitute a strategic, thorough and effective institutional approach to quality enhancement.

Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

The audit team found the Institute's arrangements for postgraduate research students met the precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes*, and are effective in securing academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Published information

The audit found that reliance could reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the Institute publishes about the quality of its educational provision and the standards of its awards.

Features of good practice

The audit team identified the following areas of good practice:

- The provision of well managed and resourced specialist library services (paragraph 82, 144)

- The effectiveness of the Centre for Academic and Professional Literacies as a research-informed support service for academic writing, in particular for students learning at a distance (paragraph 91)

- The strategic approach to the integration of research and scholarship with teaching (paragraph 105)

- The Doctoral School Code of Practice and handbook for students (paragraph 140)

- The provision of course information to students through the portal and through advice of programme leaders and administrators (paragraph 168).

Recommendations for action

The audit team recommends that the Institute consider further action in some areas.

Recommendations for action that the team considers advisable:

- ensure that the collaborative provision procedures for initial approval, including partner approval, meet the expectations of sections 2 and 7 of the QAA *Code of practice* (paragraph 123)

- ensure that ongoing monitoring arrangements of the learning environment for students in collaborative arrangements meet the expectations of section 2 of the *Code of Practice* (paragraphs 126, 135)

- ensure an up-to-date and authoritative listing of collaborative provision is publicly available (paragraph 170).

Recommendations for action that the team considers desirable:

- continue to review faculty roles, responsibilities and their relationship to faculty structures to ensure clear and direct focus on quality assurance. The Institute should ensure that resultant changes to quality assurance and enhancement procedures are communicated effectively to staff (paragraph 18)

- ensure that any changes to the academic infrastructure are identified and that any appropriate modifications to Institute procedures and policies are implemented in a timely and systematic manner and disseminated to staff (paragraph 44, 54)

- evaluate the effective adoption, by staff, of quality enhancement activities and the consequent influence of such activities on all teaching (paragraph 108)

- review supervisory arrangements for postgraduate research students to secure the advantages of the supervisory team approach outlined in section 1 of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 150)

- review the use of independent chairs to further secure fairness and consistency in postgraduate research examination boards (paragraph 162).

Section 1: Introduction and background

The institution and its mission

1   The Institute of Education (the Institute) is a self-governing College of the University of London that was established in 1902 as the London Day Training College in order to deliver high-quality training for teachers. It was incorporated into the university of London in 1932 as the Institute of Education and became a College of the federal University with its own Royal Charter in 1987. The Institute was granted degree-awarding powers in 2006 and these powers are being exercised from the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year.

2   During 2008-09 the Institute had just over 6,650 students, equivalent to 3,241 full-time equivalent (FTE). Approximately 1,603 were full-time, of whom 67 per cent were pursuing Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. Overall, 67 per cent of the Institute's students were registered for professional development programmes, 21 per cent for ITE programmes and 12 per cent for research degrees. The Institute offers a range of academic awards in the field of education and related social sciences and, as a result, interacts with a number of external agencies. The commitment to ITE has been maintained and over 1,400 graduates register annually for its Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes, offered in partnership with approximately 1,000 schools and colleges in the London area.

3   The Institute's mission is to pursue excellence in education and related areas of social science and professional practice. In undertaking this mission the Institute aims to adhere to the highest standards of academic rigour in all its work, to be guided by a concern for truth and justice, and to make a positive contribution to the development of individuals, institutions and societies facing the challenges of change. To this end, it will engage in:

- research and scholarship of national and international significance

- high quality, research-informed postgraduate and post-experience learning and teaching programmes

- the promotion of new ideas in policy and professional practice grounded in its research and teaching expertise

- consultancy and other services to support and develop the quality of educational systems and related fields of policy and practice.

The information base for the audit

4   The Institute provided the audit team with a briefing paper and supporting documentation, including that related to the sampling trails selected by the team. The Briefing Paper contained references to sources of evidence to illustrate the Institution's approach to managing the security of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of its educational provision. The team had a hard copy of all documents referenced in the Briefing Paper; in addition the team had access to an electronic copy of most supporting documentation, including key committee minutes and papers for the previous year.

5   The Students' Union produced a student written submission setting out the students' views on the accuracy of information provided to them, the experience of students as learners and their role in quality management.

6   In addition, the team had access to:

- the report of the previous Institutional audit (2003)

- reports produced by other relevant bodies (for example, professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs))

- the institution's internal documents

- the notes of team meetings with staff and students.

Developments since the last audit

7   The audit team found that the Institute has responded effectively to the 2003 Audit and its recommendations. However, it is now difficult to isolate particular responses within the broader range of more substantial changes that have taken place. These include the grant of degree awarding powers in 2006 and a wide restructuring of the Institute and its governance and management that has taken place since 2007. This restructuring is still relatively recent in terms of the cycles of activity of validation, monitoring and review and the team saw signs of change still being worked through at some points.

8   Before the 2003 audit, restructuring of the academic areas of the Institute had led to a reduction in the number of schools from 21 to 12. Since that audit these schools have been redefined as departments within a structure of three faculties - Childhood and Health, Culture and Pedagogy, and Policy and Society, together with the Doctoral School, which manages areas of postgraduate research student activities. The Institute gave weight to intellectual and programme coherence in establishing these faculties with the result that they are of unequal size but the smallest still has critical mass. This reorganisation added a layer of management but this was justified on the grounds that it would bring greater effectiveness.

9   The restructuring has also extended to the deliberative structure, an important element given the greater autonomy exercised by the Institute. Senate retains overall responsibility but a Teaching Committee has been introduced, providing an intermediate layer between Institute level and programme level. The Teaching Committee has become an important focus for policy and decision making and the audit team felt there may be a risk that it might be overwhelmed by business. However, there are signs that the Institute is working to manage this through a set of sub-committees with responsibility for particular areas. Finally, since the 2003 audit the Institute has appointed a new Deputy Director and also two assistant directors to support the Director and provide stronger institutional leadership.

10   As well as increasing managerial effectiveness, the changes have been explicitly designed to enhance teaching and particularly to put research informed teaching at the centre of the Institute's work. Overall, the audit team saw that this, together with quality assurance and enhancement were clear priorities in the restructuring, addressing the key recommendation from the 2003 audit. Responses from the senior staff that the team met indicated that they believed the restructuring had had a beneficial effect and on the basis of the evidence available to them, the team concurred. However, the team found evidence through its meetings, that all staff in Departments may not be fully engaged in the new structures. Structurally all staff still do have a voice either through election to Senate and/or through membership of the Academic Board which makes a direct input to Senate.

11   The Institute focuses on three main areas: Initial Teacher Education; academic study and professional development in education at master's and doctoral levels; and research. These latter two areas are closely linked to the Institute's research strategy. The RAE 2008 was a further, very significant part of the developments at the Institute since last Audit. There was an increase in research active staff, and very strong success in the Research Assessment Exercise itself as detailed in discussion of Research Environment in Section 6 of this annex. Teaching informed by research and research itself form the essence of a strong UK and international brand for the Institute and supports its Mission. However, the audit team also heard that more recent developments are likely to pose challenges for the Institute: success in RAE 008 was matched by a reduction in income rather than an increase; special funding previously enjoyed by the Institute had been reduced.

Institutional framework for the management of academic standards and learning opportunities

12   The Institute's framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities has three elements: the academic deliberative structure; the academic management structure; and institutional processes and procedures for assurance of standards and quality in academic provision. Much of the framework has been put in place since the 2003 audit and the evidence is that at Institute level it is generally fit for purpose and robust. At faculty level the structures are also generally effective.

13   The Senate has explicit formal responsibilities for academic standards and quality but these are delegated predominantly to the Teaching Committee (chaired by the Assistant Director, Learning and Teaching) and to a lesser extent the Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Committee (chaired by the Assistant Director, Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer). The Teaching Committee is supported by five sub-committees supporting different aspects of its responsibilities and different aspects of the framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. Particularly important, as far as the strength of the Framework is concerned are the Validation Sub-Committee, which is responsible for validation and re-accreditation of all taught programmes, the Regulations and Assessment Committee, and the recently created Scrutiny Panel on Collaborative Partnerships.

14   The management structure of the Institute has been extensively revised since the last audit. The Deputy Director is explicitly 'responsible for the effective performance and development of the Institute's academic activities', while the Assistant Director, Learning and Teaching and International, has responsibility for 'the strategic oversight of the range, quality and consistency of academic activities and the maintenance of standards within their areas of responsibility'. Responsibility for academic standards and quality in each of the faculties rests with the Dean. The assistant directors and the deans report directly to the Deputy Director. On the basis of the evidence of the documentation provided and the meetings with staff, the audit team concluded that this management team was offering strong and appropriate leadership within the Institute.

15   As part of the reorganisation into faculties, the Institute requires that faculties other than the Doctoral School have similar management structures focused on a set of functions and responsibilities: learning and teaching, quality assurance and quality enhancement, postgraduate research students, and research, consultancy and knowledge transfer. Each of the three faculties has at least one director in each of these areas, with the directors for learning and teaching, and quality assurance and quality enhancement being supported by learning, teaching and quality managers. All deans have established committee structures in their faculties, with committees usually chaired by the appropriate Faculty Director. These have similarities but vary depending on the size of the faculty and the nature of its offering. The Doctoral School has an analogous committee structure but with differences to reflect the School's research agenda. In the faculties, these committees have an important role in scrutinising proposals for new courses and developing policies; in the Doctoral School the Board of Examiners for Doctoral Students plays an equally important role in scrutinising doctoral examinations reports and outcomes.

16   It was clear to the audit team that although deans had the overall responsibility, day-to-day integration in the framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities depended on the faculty directors. This is due to their pivotal position as part of faculty management teams, as chairs of faculty committees, and as ex officio members of Institute committees.

17   The audit team judged from the broad range of evidence available that the active presence of the Deputy Director, the assistant directors, the deans, and the faculty directors has been a major strength in the reorganisation and renewal that has taken place in the Institute since the 2003 audit. However, the team had also some concerns for the future. At Institute level, for example, the chairing of committees is relatively enclosed. The Assistant Director, Learning and Teaching and International chairs the Teaching Committee and three of the five of its sub-committees. The Deputy Director is de facto the Deputy Chair of Senate, a member of the Teaching Committee, and also chairs the Regulations and Assessment Sub-Committee. It may be appropriate for the Institute to consider drawing on a wider constituency of senior academic staff when appointing chairs to Sub-Committees.

18   The audit team had a more direct concern in relation to faculty management and governance, and particularly the possible overlap of responsibilities leading either to confusion or to duplication of effort. For example, while from one point of view, it is logical to have a Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching, and a separate Faculty Director of Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement, in practice the audit team found that the enhancement of learning opportunities falls within both portfolios. On the evidence available to the team, proposals for new courses or new policies may be discussed by groups with broadly similar memberships, often confined to those attending by virtue of a role in the faculty or a programme. The team felt there would be a benefit to both staff and to the Institute in broader engagement and involvement of staff in faculty governance. As a consequence of the above, the audit team recommends it desirable for the Institute to continue to review faculty roles, responsibilities and their relationship to faculty structures to ensure clear and direct focus on quality assurance. The Institute should ensure that resultant changes to quality assurance and enhancement procedures are communicated effectively to staff.

19   Management by the Institute of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities is supported by strong processes and accessible and comprehensive documentation. In the management of programmes there are clearly documented processes which are regularly evaluated. The Institute's Learning and Teaching Handbook provides a central source of advice and guidance on quality matters and the audit team found that some faculties have developed their own complementary Quality Manual, enabling all staff to be fully informed and engaged, and vigilant in the maintenance of standards. The team encourages the Institute to require that all faculties and the Doctoral School work with the Institute Quality Assurance Unit to develop a Faculty quality manual as a further way of enabling all staff to be fully involved and engaged.

20   All students are governed by General Academic Regulations with additional regulations covering particular programmes. Postgraduate research students are governed by sound processes for acceptance, progression and examination, well documented for them in the Doctoral School Student Code of Practice, the Doctoral School Induction Handbook, and the MPhil/PhD Student Handbook. Finally procedures for complaints and appeals are set out in the Student Guide to Institute Policies and Procedures 2009-10.

21   There is evidence that the Institute is regularly reviewing its Quality procedures. For example, the procedures for the approval and review of programmes set out in the Institute Learning and Teaching Handbook, are currently under review. The Institute has established the principle that the same procedures pertain to collaborative provision as to Institute-delivered provision, but the audit team noted that implementation of this was still in progress.

22   A great deal has been done over the past three years to ensure that the Institute has a strong framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. However, the Institute is aware that in some areas the framework is still developing.

Section 2: Institutional management of academic standards

Approval, monitoring and review of award standards

23   The Institute manages its academic standards through policies and procedures developed and maintained by central committees and based on the QAA Academic Infrastructure. Academic regulations provide a framework to define and maintain the academic standards of the Institute's awards. The key mechanisms for the development and maintenance of academic standards are programme approval, annual monitoring, periodic review and the use of external examiners and other external reference points. Details can be found in various documents in the Quality Assurance section of the Calendar.

Programme approval

24   A review of procedures for the development and approval of programmes and modules has led to a new system having been put in place in 2008-09. There is now a separation of planning considerations from curriculum matters so that the market opportunities and the related resource needs can be assessed directly.

25   Senate delegates responsibility to the Teaching Committee to approve new programmes and then it confirms approval. The Teaching Committee gives responsibility for this activity to the Validation Sub-Committee and the approval of programmes and modules initially takes place at the Faculty Validation Panel. Programme teams develop a proposal using the guidance and templates available on the intranet. Guidance covers the use of the Academic Infrastructure. The proposal must include support from external sources such as a subject adviser and or PSRBs. The panel may ask the team to address any issues and when it is satisfied with the proposal the Chair will sign and forward it to the Validation Sub-Committee (paragraph 57).

26   The Institute procedures for approval of collaborative programmes should follow the same process as for internal provision with the additional requirement from 2009-10 for completion of a partnership proposal form, for partnerships that lead to the award of credit. Such new collaborative partnership arrangements should be approved by the Scrutiny Panel on Collaborative Partnerships and then be subject to the standard process for validation. However, the audit team found that this was not always the case. A new policy and helpful guidance on the development of collaborative partnerships is provided (see Section 5, below).

27   The audit team viewed a range of documents relating to programme approval and can confirm that procedures were clearly laid out at Institute level in guidance available in the Calendar and the Institute Learning and Teaching Handbook. The team saw effective use of the

Academic Infrastructure in the approval process and the procedures worked effectively and consistently from the faculty to Senate.

Monitoring

28   Annual monitoring is undertaken through annual programme review. Information about the process is available on the Quality Assurance web page of the Calendar. All taught programmes and collaborative provision are included. Programme teams are responsible for producing the review, drawing on external examiner recommendations, student feedback, progression and completion rates and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment. The focus on external examiners' reports contributes to the Institute's maintenance of academic standards. The report is considered by the relevant faculty or the Doctoral School Committee (see paragraph 59). The Committee identifies and addresses faculty issues and reports back to programme teams and produces a report for the Teaching Committee on key issues. The Committee monitors and addresses institution-wide concerns and reports to Senate on any major issues. It keeps faculties and the Doctoral School informed by reporting back to them. The Teacher Education Programme uses an amended form to meet professional body requirements.

29   Examples of the annual programme review process show detailed discussion at programme and faculty level and summary discussions at the Teaching Committee, particularly in relation to the comments in external examiner reports and consideration of students' progression and completion rates. The audit team concluded that the process contributes effectively to the maintenance of standards of awards.

Review

30   Periodic review of programmes takes place every five years. The process is laid down in the Institute's Periodic Programme Review: Purposes and Procedure. The Teaching Committee delegates this responsibility to the Validation Sub-Committee. It agrees the annual timetable, approves the reports, monitors the resulting actions and reports to the Teaching Committee and Senate. The audit team noted, however, that the cycle of reviews for some individual programmes were outside the specified five-year period.

31   The Validation Sub-Committee appoints a review panel to conduct the review (paragraph 61). The key areas for consideration at the review include the quality and standards of the programme, whether the programme should be re-accredited (with or without conditions), the currency of the curriculum and effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies, and equal opportunities. The audit team saw a number of periodic programme review documents that adhered to this process.

32   The report on the review is presented to the Validation Sub-Committee for approval which will recommend re-accreditation of the programme to the Teaching Committee. The faculty programme team draws up an action plan to address any recommendations. If there are conditions, faculties will produce an action plan focusing on how conditions will be met. The final stage is for a summary report and action plan to be sent to Senate. Progress on the action plan will be monitored at faculty-level committees. In future the Validation Sub-Committee will receive a report one year after the periodic review.

33   The audit team scrutinised a number of documents that confirmed that the Institute has robust and thorough processes for reviewing programmes to secure the standards of awards and take account of relevant elements of the Academic Infrastructure.

External examiners

34   The Institute regards the reports submitted by external examiners as 'a vital element of the process by which the Institute assures the standards of its awards and of the processes by

which its awards are made'. The on-line academic regulations contain clear guidance on the external examining process.

35   There is a board of examiners for each award or related group of awards. External examiners for taught programmes are appointed by Senate on the recommendation of a dean and endorsed by the Assistant Director, Learning, Teaching and International, who is Chair of the Teaching Committee; the Registry coordinates the appointment. External examiners for collaborative programmes are appointed through the same process. The training for external examiners involves regular induction sessions and the audit team saw a recent example of such activity from 2009.

36   External examiners send their report to the examinations section of Registry within 14 days of the examination board. The audit team saw a range of reports which were satisfactorily completed. The report is then sent to the Assistant Director Learning, Teaching and International and the Academic Registrar. Within faculties the recipients are the Dean, Faculty Director of Quality Assurance (FDQA), Programme Leader, Learning, Teaching and Quality Manager, and Chair of Board of Examiners. For research degrees the report is received by the Dean of the Doctoral School, Programme Co-ordinator and Module Tutors.

37   In 2008-09 a scrutiny panel was set up to address cross-faculty issues and draw attention to recommendations for actions by the external examiners. The scrutiny panel is made up of staff from the Quality Assurance Unit and examinations section who review the reports. It highlights issues to faculties and it raises overarching institutional issues with the Assistant Director, Learning, Teaching and International for the Teaching Committee's business. The audit team saw examples of the feedback to staff that included an 'Issues for Action Form' and an external examiner report highlighted to show areas to address. Faculty programme teams develop an action plan approved by the dean.

38   Once the faculty has considered the comments from the external examiner, the FDQA contacts the examiner outlining the actions that will be taken. The programme leader also contacts the examiner outlining a programme plan to address them. The scrutiny panel also receives a copy of the response to the external examiner. All issues and actions taken are included in annual programme review. Student programme representatives can see external examiner reports when they attend committee meetings although, due to some student's work commitments, they may not have the opportunity. At Institute level, committee representation is more regular and these student representatives are able to read the reports. The examinations section of Registry produces summaries of external examiner reports and presents them to Teaching Committee every year. Senate also receives them with programme action plans to ensure 'additional security' in view of its newly acquired degree awarding powers.

39   The documentation read by the audit team and the discussions with staff and students confirmed that the Institute operates an effective external examiner process and this supports a judgement of confidence in the Institute's management of academic standards.

Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points

40   The Institute states that it bases 'its policies and procedures on the requirements of the relevant external bodies'. The Academic Infrastructure is used to ensure that quality and standards are maintained through these policies and procedures. The Quality Assurance Unit provides links to the QAA and other information on aspects of the Academic Infrastructure on the quality assurance section of the Calendar.

41   The Teaching Committee is responsible for the policies and procedures that support the Institute's quality framework. A working group of the Committee reviewed the compliance with sections of the *Code of practice* in 2008-09. The Institute has since embarked on addressing a number of the sections of the *Code*. The Admissions Policy was completed in 2009; however a number of other sections of the *Code* are currently being applied to the development of a series

of university codes and policies. The Code of Practice on Assessment and Work-based and Placement Learning are currently in draft. The Regulations and Assessment Sub-committee is planning to set up a working group to establish a Code of Academic Conduct to address plagiarism and work is being undertaken to provide careers advice and guidance that takes account of section 8 of the *Code of practice.*

42   The *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* were accepted in 2005 by the then Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Committee (later replaced by the Teaching Committee). Faculties have recently updated their programme specifications and they are available on the Institute's external website.

43   Staff are provided with a range of guidance and information on the intranet in Guidance for completion of Programme and Module Proposal Forms, Design and Development of New Programmes and Modules, Programme Proposal Form (2009a) and the Institute Learning and Teaching Handbook including use of the FHEQ, programme specifications, subject benchmarks, and *Code of practice.*

44   The audit team viewed periodic review documents that confirmed PSRB accreditation and support for the programme. The team's examination of documentation and discussion with staff found a number of examples of the use of the Academic Infrastructure in existing policies and procedures; a number of others were still under development. However, the Institute's processes for quality assurance would be improved if its codes and policies engaged more fully with the *Code of practice* in more timely manner (see also paragraph 41). The team therefore recommends it desirable for the Institute to ensure that any changes to the Academic Infrastructure are identified, and that any appropriate modifications to Institute procedures and policies are implemented, in a timely and systematic manner and disseminated to staff.

Assessment policies and regulations

45   The Institute's regulatory framework was developed in readiness for the implementation of degree awarding powers in 2006. Since then, the Regulations and Assessment Sub-Committee of the Teaching Committee has begun to work on developing the Code of Practice on Assessment, building on its existing Assessment Guidelines (paragraph 41).

46   There is a board of examiners for each award or related group of awards appointed by Senate. The chair is responsible to Senate for the operation of the board and the Regulations and Assessment Sub-committee oversee the membership of Boards. The Teaching Committee has an overview on assessment matters. It monitors assessment processes and focuses on any assessment issues through its analysis of external examiner reports and through the annual programme review reports. At a local level, programme teams address issues of assessment raised by the annual programme review process including external examiner reports.

47   Information on assessment is found in The Regulation for the Assessment of Students (September 2008) including clear guidance on the roles of Chair of Board of Examiners and external examiners, moderation and academic offences. This document is also on the student information site as well as The Student Guide to Institute Policies and procedures 2009-10. The Institute Student Handbook includes information on assessment matters including plagiarism and appeals. Each programme provides a student handbook with information on assessment. Students that the audit team met expressed satisfaction with the information they received including the appeals and complaints procedure.

48   Given the Institute's wide range of programmes and external body requirements, the Cross-Phase Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Sub- Committee of the Teaching Committee has set up an Assessment Review Group (ARG) to look at policy and practice in relation to ITE assessment. The audit team would encourage the Institute to publish a final Code of Practice on Assessment as soon as possible.

Management information - statistics

49   The management information systems and student records (RMIS&SR) section of the Registry is responsible for data production and analysis. It offers a service to faculties so that staff can access reports on cohort analysis, student applications, enrolments and progression. These can then be used to provide evidence for evaluations such as periodic reviews, self-evaluation documents to Ofsted and to improve data for HESA.

50   The information is received by the Faculty Learning and Teaching Quality Manager and the programme administrators who make it available to programme leaders. They then use it to consider the progress of their students when they complete annual programme review reports (paragraph 28). Some programme leaders stated that they have had difficulty accessing data needed to complete the annual review pro forma but according to staff met by the audit team, the process had now improved. The data is also considered by faculty learning teaching and quality committees and then feeds into the quality procedures that report to the Teaching Committee. The data is considered at central committees to inform action plans. For example the Student Experience and Widening Participation Sub-Committee was asked by the Teaching Committee to review progression and completion data. The team concluded that the distribution of RMIS&SR data was contributing to the management of academic standards. The team considered that the Institute makes effective use of statistical management information in the oversight of its academic standards.

51   The overall conclusion reached by the audit team is that confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of its academic standards.

Section 3: Institutional management of learning opportunities

Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points

52   The Academic Infrastructure and external reference points are considered by the Institute when addressing the learning opportunities for students. The Student Experience and Widening Participation Sub-Committee of the Teaching Committee has responsibility to 'monitor and review the effectiveness of strategies, policies and procedures that affect the overall student experience' and makes recommendations on development and revisions to the Teaching Committee.

53   There is information about sections of the *Code of practice* available, although as noted in paragraph 41 a number of related university policies and codes are still under development. Those that are available are provided electronically on the Quality Assurance section of the Calendar. Hard copies are given to relevant staff in faculties and the Doctoral School. Teaching staff met by the audit team identified a range of places to obtain information. There is a Learning and Teaching Handbook containing information on quality on the website and some faculties have a quality manual (paragraph 19). Documents provided for approval, monitoring and review demonstrated that the Academic Infrastructure was considered in order to ensure quality of opportunities.

54   The audit team concluded that the Institute was applying the Academic Infrastructure and PSRB considerations particularly in approval, monitoring and review. The development of codes and policies that engage with the *Code of practice* is progressing since degree awarding powers were granted. However, the rate at which each section is being address could be more timely to benefit student's learning opportunities.

Approval, monitoring and review of programmes

Approval

55   The new approval process, put in place after the review in 2008-09 separates out the planning requirements from the curriculum development so that the market opportunities and the resourcing of a new programme can be considered before the proposed programme is sent to the Validation Sub-Committee. Guidance on the process is available on the quality assurance section of the Calendar. The programme proposal form is in two parts. The programme planning approval requires information on the market, resources, and delivery mode. This is approved at the faculty in partnership with the Institute's Head of Planning and Performance. The second part relates to 'Academic Considerations'.

56   The implementation of this new process is recent, however the audit team was provided with approval documents prepared using earlier pro formas at the latter stages of 2008-09. The team was able to confirm that the proposals were detailed and covered the proposed areas of information, including risk assessment and consultation with external subject experts, students, and the Library and the Learning Technologies Unit (LTU). When the programme is to be delivered by distance learning the LTU provides specialist advice.

57   Proposals are considered by a Faculty Validation Panel. After any amendments have been made by the programme team, the chair of the panel signs off the documentation, informs the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee and forwards the documents to the Validation Sub-Committee. Having considered the proposal, the Sub-Committee feeds back to the faculty any further work required on the proposal. Once all actions have been met, the programme is recommended for approval to the Teaching Committee and from there to Senate.

58   The audit team read a number of committee minutes that demonstrated that this process was adhered to, and was satisfied that the approval process was thorough and reliable.

Monitoring

59   Annual monitoring is conducted at programme level and reported through the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee (paragraph 28). Examples of annual programme review reports show full discussion at programme and faculty level, particularly the comments of external examiner reports and student feedback. Faculty committee minutes confirm that annual programme review reports are discussed further and the faculty provides a summary report to the Teaching Committee that focuses on key areas of interest particularly concerns from students and external examiners. The minutes of the Teaching Committee show consideration of the reports and the planned actions to be taken. A summary of all key issues at faculty and institutional level is produced for Senate. For 2009-10, a special meeting of faculty directors for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement and Learning and Teaching has been set up to meet with the Chair of the Teaching Committee and Secretary to give full consideration to annual programme review reports and provide agreed actions.

60   Annual programme review reports read by the audit team and discussions with staff demonstrated that the Institute provides a thorough mechanism for monitoring and ensuring the quality of learning opportunities.

Periodic review

61   The panel (paragraph 31) is appointed by the Validation Sub-Committee and is chaired by a senior member of staff from another faculty who has received training for the role. The panel also includes an external member, nominated by the Dean to the Validation Sub-Committee, and a programme leader from another faculty. The programme team produces a critical self-

assessment based on a standard format of information. A range of documents are presented, including annual programme reviews, external examiner reports, student feedback, programme specifications, progression and completion data, covering the previous three years. During the process the panel meets with students. The conclusions and recommendations of the panel together with an action plan are reported to the Validation Sub-Committee.

62   Documents presented to the audit team and the following discussions with staff confirmed that all procedures are met and that the process encourages reflection. Examples demonstrated that external representatives were present on panels, students met members of panels and actions were addressed from the programme team upwards.

63   Overall, the audit team concluded that the Institute's approach to approval, monitoring and review offers an effective contribution to the management of student learning opportunities.

Management information - feedback from students

64   The Institute has a range of mechanisms to gather feedback from students. At Institute level, students sit on key committees including the Council, Senate and all committees and sub-committees of Senate. This gives the student community the opportunity to contribute their views in the key decision-making committees of the Institute.

65   In terms of feeding back on their experience of their taught programme, students complete module evaluations. These are analysed and key issues are included in the section of the annual programme review and development report that considers student feedback. This section also reports on the issues raised by representatives on programme committees.

66   There are a number of general student evaluations and surveys, in particular, the annual Institute Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS). Few students take part in the National Student Survey (NSS) due to the small numbers on undergraduate programmes. The results of the SSS are considered by the Student Experience and Widening Participation Sub-Committee (SWEP) who scrutinise the action plan to ensure that any major areas of concern are followed up and areas of the Institute that receive positive feedback are congratulated. The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) is reviewed by the Doctoral School Committee and is also considered by the Student Experience and Widening Participation Sub-Committee and both put in place actions to address any issues.

67   Focus groups are used by the Institution to investigate specific issues. These include looking at registration of students, the international student forums and the disabled students' student voices events. The Student Experience and Widening Participation Sub-Committee considers the outcomes of the meetings of these groups. In June 2009 it considered a report on the international student forums and as a result set up a planning working group to plan a better induction for students.

68   The audit team viewed documents and spoke to both staff and students. It found that the Institute has made adequate arrangements for students to feedback on the quality of learning opportunities.

Role of students in quality assurance

69   The Institute has a range of specific challenges in relation to the distinctive nature of its student population and their active engagement in student representation. Students are represented on faculty and central committees. Scrutiny of the minutes of the Teaching Committee and Senate revealed poor attendance of student representatives at these committees. The Students' Union is active in ensuring that students are aware of these opportunities but often has difficulties in gaining active engagement in such roles, particularly from part-time students. Six times per year the Students' Union holds a Student Representatives Committee to gain an institutional oversight of matters raised by students. Formal training of student representatives does not currently take place.

70   At faculty level student representatives sit on programme committees and the Doctoral School's Students' Consultative Committee, where they have opportunities to directly engage with programme tutors and see external examiner reports. Students whom the audit team met were positive about the possibility to provide feedback at these meetings though some part-time students found it difficult to attend. They also reported that they received feedback on issues raised at the meetings and this was shared with the student body of the programme.

71   The Institute has continued to explore ways of securing effective student representation from part-time students and those with demanding professional commitments outside of their academic studies. The audit team concluded, however, that they have not been entirely successful in the initiatives developed to date.

Links between research or scholarly activity and learning opportunities

72   The Learning and Teaching Strategy makes explicit reference to the integration of research and teaching and its promotion of communities of practice. The Staff Development Strategy is directed to supporting the institutional focus on the 'scholarship of teaching' and assist in the forging of a strong link with the Institute's Research Strategy so that all teaching becomes research informed.

73   The Institute has a large number of its academic staff undertaking research at international levels. The great majority of research active staff, including professors, teach on at least one of the Institute's programmes. Students whom the audit team met were enthusiastic in highlighting the benefits of being taught by leading researchers.

74   Processes are in place to recognise and reward excellent research informed teaching. A recent review of the promotion criteria to ensure the recognition of excellent teaching has resulted in a rise in promotions of staff meeting these criteria. Staff are encouraged to apply for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme and in 2007-08 the Institute was successful in gaining three awards (paragraph 106).

75   Overall the audit team concluded that the Institute demonstrates a strategic and effective approach to the integration of research and learning opportunities for students.

Other modes of study

76   The Institute is committed to increasing the flexibility of its provision by enhancing and extending mixed mode delivery. Students, met by the audit team, spoke extremely positively about these flexible approaches.

77   In liaison with the Learning Technologies Unit (LTU) and the London Knowledge Laboratory, the Institute is keen to realise the potential offered by digital technologies and in liaison with the Centre for Work Based Learning, to support the development of new approaches to work-based learning. Proposals for new programmes which include open and distance learning and blended learning are scrutinised by the Validation Sub-committee. Thorough e-learning validation guidelines are in place which require a statement of how technology will enhance the student experience and an indication of staff experience in the use of on line teaching methods.

78   An e-learning task group has been set up to look at how capacity for e-learning and blended learning could best be developed, co-ordinated and supported at the Institute (paragraph 110). The LTU provides pedagogical support, consultation and training for academic staff and is also involved in piloting innovations. The Head of the LTU attends all validations.

79   Many programmes utilise Blackboard as a supplementary support to learning and teaching. Difficulties can often be experienced by students accessing Blackboard at the outset of a programme arising from the fact that registration is dependent upon the formal Institute registration process and the Institute is working to lessen this impact. The audit team concluded

that the Institute's proactive approach to the promotion of flexible approaches to learning makes an effective contribution to the management of the quality of learning opportunities.

Resources for learning

80   The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2007-10 is committed to the enhancement of provision of information resources in a range of media. The Information Services Department is divided into three main sections, Library Services, Media Services and Computing Services, all reporting to the Head of Information Services. In order to ensure service levels are appropriate, internal reviews are undertaken. Staff from these services regularly engage with Institute committees and work in close liaison with faculties and individual staff. Periodic user surveys are conducted internally together with information gathered from external surveys. Feedback and comments from staff and students are also gathered via suggestion boxes and email.

81   An explicit Library Strategy has been endorsed which includes clear priorities and objectives to guide the future development of the Library up to 2014. Library and Archive collections are supported by expert professional staff who provide efficient access, support and guidance for all users.

82   The library Service has received positive evaluations in the two most recent Institute student satisfaction surveys and from discussions with staff and students the audit team concluded that the specialist library services exceed the expectations of students and staff (paragraph 144). The team therefore regarded this as an area of good practice.

83   The Information Services Department holds regular meetings with the Students' Union to discuss a range of issues including strategy development. A clear specification exists for teaching resources which are timetabled centrally. The ICT infrastructure has been effectively developed to provide support for research consultancy, learning and teaching, and administration within a sustainable context and directed to individual need. The Institute portal is available to wireless network users and remote users.

84   The audit team's view was that the arrangements for the provision, allocation and management of learning resources are effective.

Admissions policy

85   The Students' Charter expresses a commitment to operating a fair and efficient admissions procedure and to providing accurate information about all programmes, services and facilities. A new admissions policy has been developed, based upon the expectations of the *Code of practice*, and this policy is reviewed annually. Students are selected according to published criteria relating to academic, professional, and experiential requirements.

86   All programme specifications include a clear description of the criteria for admission to the programme. The Institute publishes the level of skill, knowledge and or understanding required to study each programme in its prospectus and on the Institute website. Applicants value the clarity and accessibility of the information available and clearly understand their responsibilities in the application process. They may be interviewed as part of the admissions process.

87   Entry to Institute courses is extremely competitive with limited places and at least two members of academic staff will have considered the application paperwork for any applicant who may be rejected. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback which is usually provided within 20 working days. Staff met during the audit visit highlighted on-going work in relation to the policy and processes for the accreditation of prior learning in order to rationalise and refine current procedures which are not fully effective at present.

88   The audit team concluded that overall, the Institute is effective in implementing its admissions policy in a consistent manner.

Student support

89   The quality of support offered to students was identified in the 2003 Audit as an area of good practice. The Institute has continued to further enhance this support in a variety of ways. Regular meetings take place between the Directorate and the Students' Union where student support is discussed.

90   The Student Experience and Widening Access Participation Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring all aspects of student support and for developing appropriate policies and practice in this area. It makes recommendations to the Teaching Committee and it also ensures that clear and accurate information is provided to students about key services. A Student Guide to Institute Policies and Procedures 2009-10 acts as a necessary reference tool for students throughout their programmes of study.

91   The courses run by the Centre for Academic and Professional Literacies (CAPLITS) are well publicised and used by students who commend the provision for its flexibility and careful match to their needs. The Centre provides a range of short courses and workshops to help both international and home students with academic literacy and study skills, underpinning its work with research into its own practice. Students met during the audit visit valued the flexibility of access with courses run in the evenings and weekends but also available on line. In light of this, the audit team considered the effectiveness of CAPLITs as a research-informed support service for academic writing, in particular for students learning at a distance to be an example of good practice.

92   A clear induction guide and accompanying timetable supports students in their introduction to the Institute. A Doctoral School Induction Handbook is also in place. An international student induction is implemented by the International Student Coordinator. Recently conducted focus groups with international students raised a number of issues such as the need for greater levels of pastoral support, although international students claimed to have a good overall experience at the Institute.

93   The Specialist Institution's Careers Services, part of the Careers Group University of London, offers a comprehensive planning and development service to Institute students and graduates at all stages of their career. Currently arrangements to ensure engagement with the revised section 8 of the *Code* relating to Careers education Information and Guidance are ongoing.

94   The Student Support Centre was established in 2007, in liaison with the Students' Union, to act as a one-stop shop for all student queries. This effectively enables students to obtain advice, not only on support services, but also on programme and registration matters and payment of fees.

95   There is a clear definition of student entitlement to personal tutorial provision and the roles and responsibilities of the tutor in this process across the Institute. All students are allocated a personal tutor. The guidance for student entitlement in relation to tutorial support will be reviewed during 2009-10. The Doctoral School has a Code of Practice for Research Degrees which specifies the expected level of supervision and support for all doctoral students. Students have raised the need for consistency in producing a formal record of personal tutorials and requested that relevant student handbooks are reviewed to ensure that expectations are clear and variations in the amount of tutorial time and support are standardised.

96   The audit team concluded that the arrangements for student support and their oversight are making an effective contribution to the management of the quality of learning opportunities.

Staff support (including staff development)

97   The Human Resources (HR) Strategy was reviewed in 2008 in order to ensure that human resources procedures were clearly defined and understood by all staff and took account of the

varying needs of different categories of staff. The Strategy provides a framework to ensure the recruitment and retention of the best available staff and to sustain their motivation and performance. Staff spoken to during the audit visit clearly understood the key human resources procedures and considered them effective.

98   An effective induction process is in place for staff. The process runs in parallel and complements the probation process. Staff met during the audit were satisfied with the flexibility of these processes. All new lecturers attend appropriate modules from the Professional Certificate/Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher and Professional Education in order to ensure that all staff are able to reflect the appropriate standards of the Higher Education Academy Professional Standards Framework. In relation to staff appointed to the Doctoral School, those new to supervision must undertake the module on the Professional Certificate/Diploma programme and are mentored by a more experienced member of staff. Workshops are also offered.

99   A review of promotion criteria to raise the profile and status of teaching has been undertaken. During the audit staff agreed that the process was clearly understood and fairly operated. Staff achievement is recognised at faculty level and at Institutional level.

100   A key element of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is the continuing development of staff. Devolution of HR functions to the Faculties was implemented as a result of an academic restructuring in autumn 2007. The deans of faculties have overall responsibility for all staff development matters. Local staff development coordinators are responsible for identifying and encouraging appropriate development amongst staff teams. The Head of Staff Development is responsible for coordinating central services and provisions. A central programme of staff development is published annually and offers a range of workshops and seminars.

101   The Institute's staff review and development scheme includes a formal half-year review meeting, although there is not always full compliance with all of these requirements. Each member of staff is provided with a Continuing Professional Development Handbook. A peer observation system for academic staff is in place, with the emphasis upon personal development and currently, each faculty determines its own approach. However, the Institute is moving towards a more centralised system.

102   The Director of Administration chairs a meeting of support staff which provides a forum for exchange of information and views across the support departments. This group meets six times per year and is effective in ensuring that the operation of support functions meets institutional needs and objectives.

103   The audit team concluded that confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Section 4: Institutional approach to quality enhancement

104   The strategic priorities adopted by the Institute include reference to enhancement; Priority 2 commits the Institute to the ambition of being 'a major player in innovation in learning and teaching in higher education'. The audit team saw that enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities has been central to recent changes in the Institution, driven particularly by the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2007 - 2010.

105   There was clear evidence that the aims of the Learning and Teaching Strategy are being followed through and are benefitting students in the ways envisaged and that the strategic approach to the integration of research and scholarship with teaching was a feature of good practice (see also paragraph 72). The Learning and Teaching Handbook sets out that annual programme review reports are required to consider quality enhancement, and that discussion of these reports at faculty level should include 'dissemination of good practice'. This focus on

'quality enhancement/dissemination of good practice' continues in the discussions at the Teaching Committee. Faculty directors responsible for learning and teaching and quality enhancement and learning and teaching quality managers based in faculties ensure that suggestions for enhancement are captured and more widely discussed. Suggestions for enhancement made by external examiners in the context of a particular programme are also captured in the same process. Committee papers made available to the audit team indicated that these requirements are met, especially in the discussion of annual course and programme reports.

106   In meetings, senior staff indicated that the plans in the Strategy relating to promotion and reward had also been implemented with more successful cases emphasising evidence relating to teaching than in the past. The Institute also successfully entered the National Teaching Fellowship scheme for the first time in 2008; the award of three fellowships enabled the Institute to secure funds for a collaborative project 'Facilitating transitions to Masters-level learning through improved formative assessment and feedback'.

107   The value of the appointment of the Assistant Director, Learning and Teaching and International, and the importance of the Teaching Committee were apparent to the audit team. The evidence of the meeting with senior management was of a strong and shared commitment among the Assistant Director, Learning and Teaching, the Deputy Director, and the deans, first to the enhancement of teaching through pedagogic and subject based research, and second to the enhancement of the student experience. Meetings with students on taught and research programmes provided evidence that they saw themselves being taught or supervised by staff with a commitment both to research and to communicating their research in teaching and supervision.

108   Despite this, the audit team did not see evidence of a comprehensive assessment of the effects of enhancement activities which would assure the Institute that its investment in resources was having a benefit in enhancement of the teaching for all academic staff (see also paragraph 110). It therefore recommends it desirable for the Institute to carry out such a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the adoption, by staff, of quality enhancement activities and the consequent influence of such activities on all teaching.

109   The Learning and Teaching Strategy sets out an ambition to 'lead…in responding to the challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment'. The audit team did find evidence of some developments; the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment system is in general use, and new developments are supported by the Learning Technologies Unit which is part of the London Knowledge Lab (a collaborative venture between the Institute and Birkbeck College). However, there was evidence from meetings with students, for example, that consistent use of a virtual learning environment system was not securely embedded across all programmes (paragraph 79). Furthermore, the team considered that the potential synergy between the Learning Technologies Unit and the London Knowledge Lab is yet to be fully realised.

110   The impact of the Learning Technologies Unit is focussed on validation of new programmes rather than existing ones and comes at a point when plans are quite well formed. An eLearning Task Group was set up in August 2007, chaired by a professorial member of the London Knowledge Lab but did not report until November 2008; the Institute responded with short term recommendations in February 2009, but has only recently created a Long Term Action Plan (considered by Teaching Committee on the 18 November 2009). The audit team encourages the Institute to review the priority given to these initiatives as it did not see evidence that the Institute was comprehensively evaluating the engagement of all staff with these enhancements.

111   The meeting with senior staff indicated that the timeframe of the current Learning and Teaching Strategy might be extended by one year from 2010 to 2011. However, there were already clear and appropriate ideas for the next iteration of the Strategy, for example, the

development of institute-based teaching awards (complementing the NTFS schemes), the internationalisation of the curriculum, and the development of open mode and mixed mode methods of delivery of courses.

112   The audit team found that the Institute has a comprehensive range of activities which constitute a strategic, thorough and effective institutional approach to quality enhancement.

Section 5: Collaborative arrangements

The institution's framework for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities

113   International partnership activity has been a feature of the work of the Institute of Education for over 100 years. The latest Corporate Strategy of the Institute contains a commitment to refocus international developments, extend global reach and form partnerships in the UK and abroad to foster collaboration in research, scholarship, consultancy and teaching activities. Through a revised International Strategy the Institute aims to become an international institution, enhancing reputation, profile and income through research, teaching, consultancy and major conferences.

114   The International Strategy includes a clear objective to extend the range of collaborative partnerships with leading international institutions, and to continue active participation in mutually beneficial collaborations with other institutions in the UK and overseas. There has been a gradual development of activity within the UK and overseas, largely on the basis of the interests and outreach work of staff and their professional contacts.

115   Until September 2008, the Institute degrees were awarded by the University of London and the Institute was not permitted to franchise taught programmes of study. However, the Institute developed the following types of collaborative partnerships in taught provision: partnership programmes or modules delivered by Institute staff in the premises of a partner organisation; dual awards; joint awards; and articulation/progression agreements. The Institute has not yet acted as the awarding body for validated provision in a partner organisation and is still developing a procedure for assuring the academic standards and quality arrangements in such cases.

116   A revised Policy on Collaboration specifies the Institute's procedures for the development and management of collaborative partnerships. Two discrete sets of procedures are stipulated for the progression of partnerships in research, consultancy or knowledge transfer and for the development and quality assurance of partnerships that lead to the award of credit.

117   The responsibilities of the Senate for defining, maintaining and assuring the academic standards of collaborative provision are delegated to the Teaching Committee and its sub-committees. A Scrutiny Panel on Collaborative Partnerships, which reports to the Validation Sub-Committee, was established in February 2009 to consider proposals for new partnerships of any type. The Panel terms of reference and modus operandi emphasise a less formal and relatively light touch approach to approval of proposed partnerships, with meetings, including virtual meetings, organised according to demand. The audit team considered that this informality can mean that decisions to approve proposed partnerships are not recorded in a systematic way; for example, a proposal to run a 30-credit module at an international institution was given approval to proceed through a brief email exchange during the summer months. This decision was not subsequently recorded in the notes of the next meeting of the Panel.

118   The Scrutiny Panel for Collaborative Partnerships is chaired by the Director of International Affairs. Given the thrust of the Institute's International Strategy, the audit team was concerned that the Scrutiny Panel is chaired by someone whose substantive role requires the promotion of international activity and partnerships. Although the team found no evidence of any problems to date, this arrangement has the potential for a conflict of interests.

Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points

119   The requirements of the section 2 and 7 of the *Code of practice* have been reviewed by the Institute to inform the development of the new Policy on Collaboration and a staff guide to developing partnerships. These will be made available to staff through the Institute intranet. The policy and guide are dated July 2009 and yet the procedures that they describe are subject to further development and discussion. This will enable the Institute to ensure that its procedures address fully the requirements of the section 2 and 7 of the *Code.*

Approval of collaborative arrangements

120   A potential partner checklist is required by the Scrutiny Panel for Collaborative Partnerships and is deemed to provide evidence of due diligence and exploration of the suitability of the proposed partnership and partner. This checklist is completed by the member of academic staff who is proposing the partnership on the basis of their knowledge of the potential partner organisation. The questions on the Checklist explore the fit of a new proposal with Institute corporate objectives and its new policy on collaboration. The due diligence questions on the Potential Partner Checklist completed by staff for the Scrutiny Panel do not cover the financial standing of the partner.

121   Approval by the Scrutiny Panel of a proposed collaborative partnership authorises the production of a memorandum of understanding. For partnerships that lead to the award of credit, where there are contractual obligations, the Institute uses a memorandum of agreement to specify the roles and responsibilities of partners, and for partnerships in research, consultancy or knowledge transfer, a contract is drawn up. Checklists, memoranda and reports that were shown to the audit team were often not signed or signatures were undated and so it was unclear whether approval had been granted, when approval had been given, or that specified Institute departments had been consulted about a development. Overall, the team concluded that the Institute processes and procedures had not been fully implemented and that there was scope for improvement in the record keeping. In one instance, a partnership that led to the award of credit was operating, but the Memorandum of Agreement had lapsed and so the partnership was not covered by a current contractual agreement.

122   The procedures require that all proposed partnerships that lead to the award of credit should be approved at both faculty and institute level in accordance with the standard Institute procedures for validation (Sections 2/3). However, the audit team was advised that some taught collaborative partnerships had not been subject to a formal externally referenced approval process, such as validation. The rationale given for this position is that the Institute works with leading international institutions and sends its own staff to deliver already approved Institute programmes. Hence the Institute's view is that there is no need for a formal externally referenced approval process. There is also no perceived need for a formal institutional visit that involves an external adviser to evaluate the capacity of a potential partner to fulfil their designated role in the arrangements. For example, to confirm the suitability of the learning environment including any arrangements for student support by locally engaged staff. The audit team was advised that local staff were not involved in the delivery of Institute programmes. However, it became clear that aspects of learner support are provided by local staff, whose suitability is not formally evaluated, nor is there a procedure for formal reporting of designated changes in learner support.

123   Overall the audit team considered that some of the detailed matters that can affect the quality of the student learning experience are not formally evaluated in an approval process that is externally referenced, as specified in sections 2 and 7 of the *Code*. It therefore recommends it advisable for the Institute to ensure that the collaborative provision procedures for initial approval, including partner approval, meet the expectations of sections 2 and 7 of the *Code of practice.*

Monitoring and review of collaborative arrangements

124   The Institute requires that all partnership programmes, joint awards and dual awards are subject to annual monitoring and review, and that the outcomes are considered at both faculty and Institute level in accordance with the standard Institute procedures. The audit team saw examples of annual monitoring review reports which covered the home and partnership versions of a taught programme from which it was clear that evaluation was thorough and effective. In the case of a dual award programme, the first annual monitoring review seen by the team was only completed after an initial operating period of two years and while this corresponded with the end of the taught element of the programme, the timing gave rise to a concern about variation in the frequency of monitoring.

125   There is no formal requirement for routinely monitoring any changes to the learning environment which might affect the quality of the student experience, for example, any turnover of local staff who support learning. Whilst the Policy on Collaboration (July 2009) indicates that all partnerships should appoint a coordinator to oversee each collaboration and liaise on a regular basis with the collaborative partner, a role descriptor which will specify the associated responsibilities is still under development.

126   Overall, the audit team concluded that there is scope to improve the monitoring of the quality of the learning environment, as described in section 2 of the *Code*, so that the Institute can be confident that its expectations of the quality of the student learning experience are fully realised in practice (see also paragraph 132). Consequently, the audit team recommends that it is advisable for the Institute to ensure that ongoing monitoring arrangements of the learning environment for students in collaborative arrangements meet the expectations of section 2 of the *Code of practice*.

Assessment, external examining and student transcripts

127   Assessment arrangements for students on partnership programmes or modules that lead to an Institute award, or the award of credit by the Institute, mirror those for the equivalent provision at the Institute and operate within the regulations of the Institute. Arrangements for joint or dual award provision can incorporate procedures and regulations of the partner organisation. Given that the majority of partnership programmes or modules are taught at the Institute as well as in a partner institution, where possible, the Institute prefers to appoint an external examiner to cover both elements. This enables a thorough comparison of the programme in its two locations, with benchmarking of standards of student attainment and the quality of the learning experience. The assessment outcomes from internal and collaborative versions of the same provision are considered at the same examination board, facilitating comparison and ensuring systematic consideration of outcomes.

128   The Institute is the sole awarding body for partnership programmes and modules, and has shared authority in respect of joint and dual award provision. The Institute issues certificates, diploma supplements and transcripts of student results for the relevant awards. The examples shown to the audit team were found to be generally informative and acceptable. The language of study is given on the diploma supplement. However, the location of study was not always specified on the transcript, certificate or diploma supplement, except for some joint and dual awards. The team encourages the Institute to address this issue.

Role of students in quality assurance

129   The opportunities for collaborative student involvement in the approval process are limited, especially for international collaborative students. Despite this, the audit team heard about examples of programmes where the staff team from the Institute are in regular email contact with the student body in an international partner organisation and it was stated that email contact between Institute staff and students can enable remote engagement by a student representative with programme meetings that occur in London.

130   The audit team was advised that the Institute administers its standard internal surveys to collaborative partnership students based in international or UK-based partner organisations. While there are advantages in gathering some elements of feedback in this manner, to enable benchmarking with home students, the team considers that opportunities are missed to gather specific feedback on the learning experience of collaborative students by using a dedicated survey tailored to their needs.

Other modes of study

131   The Centre for Academic and Professional Literacies (CAPLITS) team has responded extremely positively to a request from the programme team for an international partnership programme based in the Far East by providing bespoke e-learning materials for students whose first language is not English and who require support in academic writing. In other cases programme teams provide collaborative partnership students with access to digitised materials.

Learning resources (including staffing and staff development)

132   The audit team was advised that international partnership programmes and modules are mainly delivered by Institute staff and that no other staff were involved in supporting learning. For these reasons approval arrangements do not evaluate learning resources including staffing and the Institute does not undertake staff development for staff in partner institutions. By contrast, UK-based partnerships programmes and modules often include staff from the partner organisation to teach and support learning including assessment. The approval arrangements at faculty and institute level include consideration of the suitability of partner staff in this context, and as members of a programme team that spans the Institute and the relevant partner organisation. The audit team believes that there is scope to ensure that the approval and monitoring arrangements in relation to those who provide local support for learning are strengthened and that opportunities may exist for staff development activities (see also paragraph 123).

Student support and information (including complaints and appeals arrangements)

133   Student handbooks used for partnership programmes are usually identical to the internal version of a programme; occasionally, there is a variant but differences are minor. The audit team was advised that the identical handbooks contain the complaints and appeals information. There are advantages to this approach in ensuring that students receive the same course information irrespective of location. The disadvantage of this approach is that it means that opportunities are lost to tailor the information to the needs of collaborative students, for example, to indicate the formal channels through which students might contact the awarding institution directly in the case of a complaint or appeal.

134   The requirement for the partner institution to make available to the Institute its publicity and marketing materials for checking is included in Memoranda of Agreement. The procedure is that the materials are checked by programme teams and the Marketing team at the Institute.

135   The audit team was concerned to find that, during the audit, the Institute's collaborative provision register was incomplete. Subsequently, this deficiency was corrected. However, the team would recommend the Institute to make certain that it has robust processes for ensuring the Institute's collaborative provision register is comprehensive and that there is current representation of all partnerships established by the Institute (see paragraphs 169-170).

136   Overall, the audit team considered that the arrangements for the assurance, monitoring and review and management of collaborative provision, especially in an international context offered considerable scope for improvement to reflect sector best practice as presented in the *Code of practice*, especially sections 2 and 7.

Section 6: Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

137   Policies for research, consultancy and knowledge transfer at the Institute are formed within the framework of the Institute's Research Strategy. Postgraduate research programmes (PGR) fall within the overall remit of Senate which delegates decisions and policy making to the Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Committee. The Teaching Committee also exerts significant influence through setting the ethos for the optional training courses within MPhil/PhD programme and the required courses within the EdD Programme. The International Committee exerts a parallel influence because of the significant numbers of international students attracted to the PGR programmes. The Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Committee is supported by a Research, Governance and Ethics Sub-Committee which is of particular importance where some of the research involves human participants.

138   PGR Programmes are managed jointly by faculties and by the Doctoral School. Deans of faculties and the Dean of Doctoral School report to the Deputy Director who thus provides a single oversight. The audit team found evidence of a sense of partnership in these relationships and no evidence of tension. Faculties have established structures which enable them to manage the PGR Programmes they host; each has a Director of Postgraduate Research and a PGR Committee. Directors of Postgraduate Research are members of the senior management team in a faculty alongside heads of department. The Doctoral School, meanwhile, was established in 1999 and confirmed as having faculty status in 2007. Its different nature means that it requires less committee structure than the other three faculties but the Doctoral School Committee plays an important role as do its two sub-committees, the Board of Examiners for Doctoral Awards and the Doctoral School Consultative Committee.

139   The role of the Doctoral School is set out in, the Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2009-10. It brings together staff involved in the management of all aspects of academic standards and quality for PGR students. They include the staff formally appointed to the School but also faculty directors of PGR, research degree programme leaders, and research focused master's programme leaders.

140   The management responsibilities and PGR processes are well supported by clear documentation easily available to students and staff. The *Code of practice* is particularly valuable in the way key sections on supervision and training are set out to show the complementary responsibilities of student and supervisor on facing pages. The *Code* is complemented by effective student handbooks, all available via the Doctoral School website. There are handbooks for each programme, and separate EdD handbooks for UK and international students, but all versioned from a common core; these set out further clear guidance on such matters as registration, supervision, upgrading (where that occurs) and examinations. Students were particularly complimentary about the Code of Practice and handbooks and the audit team regarded this as an area of good practice.

141   There is no parallel handbook for staff involved in PGR programmes. The audit team considered that a staff handbook could provide a valuable addition to the present documentation, drawing together all aspects of the PGR programme in a way that would be beneficial for new staff and as a means of further informing staff and enabling consistency across faculties.

142   The audit team found evidence that the Institute was fully aware of the *Code of practice* as it applies to PGR programmes and had mapped its own structures and processes against the precepts, indicating broad compliance with the *Code*.

The research environment

143   The Institute of Education provides an exceptionally rich research environment for PGR students by any measure. 218 staff were submitted in the single unit of assessment in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise; 65 per cent (141 staff) were judged to be in the 4* or 3* categories. The environment has also been an expanding one.

144   PGR students have access to very rich resources through the Newsome Library. Students also benefit from the location of the Institute in Bloomsbury and the collaborative working arrangements that exist between the Institute, Birkbeck College and University College London. The evidence from documentation and meetings with students and staff was that these resources were well managed, accessible and fully deployed for the benefit of PGR students. The audit team considered this provision of well managed and resourced specialist library services to be a feature of good practice.

145   At an Institute level, the positive influence of the Doctoral School is strong and the renewed emphasis on teaching referred to earlier fosters engagement of staff and PGR students. Students spoke of the commitment of supervisors, of the energising effect of working with authoritative figures in their fields, and of a fruitful PGR culture characterised by extensive seminar programmes.

Selection, admission and induction of students

146   Applicants most commonly draw information about the Institute's PGR programmes through the online Prospectus. Enquiries will often be paralleled by informal approaches to prospective supervisors, especially in the case of MPhil/PhD applicants, but all applications must be submitted to the Doctoral School. The School has responsibility for the process up to acceptance but works with faculties in a process which has the merit of ensuring that all applications are dealt with equally and that all are scrutinised from two points of view. The Review of Research Degree Programmes (July 2006) recommended that the Institute consider more systematic use of interviews. This has happened and the results are recorded in the mapping against the Code of Practice. All EdD applicants, including international students, are interviewed with telephone or, for candidates outside the UK, email. The situation for MPhil/PhD is not so categorical; formal interviews are certainly a regular feature and it seems that most applicants will have had at least an informal face to face review meeting with a prospective supervisor. There is no evidence that the present situation is causing poorly qualified or prepared students to be registered, but the audit team would encourage the Institute to keep this matter under review in order to create parity for all applicants and to take advantage of new technologies.

147   Once registered, induction materials and Institute websites directed to PGR students make clear their affiliation to both faculty and the Doctoral School. Induction was identified as a feature of good practice in the Review of research degree programmes and the audit team's investigations found that this was still the case. The team heard, for example, that the Induction week for international students was offered more than once so as to ensure, so far as possible, that students negotiating visas or travel arrangements had an opportunity to attend. Information is provided systematically to all students with the Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2009-10 and student handbooks being issued to all new students on a 'pen drive'. The Doctoral School Induction Handbook is reissued each year.

148   The main student handbooks provide comprehensive information on, for example, ethical issues, the annual progress review, upgrading from MPhil to PhD (or progression from the training courses to the Institutional Focus Study to the thesis for EdD students), candidacy, and examination. The evidence is that the information provided at the Induction stage is comprehensive and enables students to understand what is expected of them in terms of the programme of study.

Supervision

149   The Institute's Code of Practice emphasises that supervision is a two-way relationship and provides clear guidance on the complementary roles and responsibilities of student and supervisor. Thus the supervisor is charged with 'providing academic leadership to the student' while the student is held 'responsible for his or her own research activity…and for giving the necessary time and effort to the degree'. The Code indicates that all students will have a main supervisor (ie with at least 60 per cent responsibility for supervision) and this determines the student's departmental affiliation. However the Code also signals a preference for a single supervisor arrangement. An Advisory Panel is appointed for each student containing the supervisor (or supervisors) and two other members of academic staff. The Student Handbook sets out that the Doctoral School expects there to be 'an average of fifteen meetings per year' for full time students' supervision meetings which indicates the strong support PGR students receive.

150   The audit team raised the preference for single supervisor arrangements with senior management and heard that the Institute had consciously opted for a model in which a PGR student normally had a single supervisor, but in which all students also had an Advisory Panel. The role of the Advisory Panel is set out for students in the Institute's Code of Practice and the Student Handbook: the Code of Practice sets out a series of responsibilities, the majority of which involve 'overseeing' processes; the Student Handbook tells students that their 'Advisory Panel will offer support through their involvement in the annual review process, upgrading, appointment of examiners'. Meetings with PGR students provided evidence that they saw their Advisory Panel in this light rather than as providing any significant input into supervision. Surveys do indicate above students' satisfaction with supervision (paragraph 160). However, the audit team concluded that the Institute's model does not systematically provide the additional benefits which the QAA *Code* envisages as accruing from the supervisory team which it considers will normally be in place. These benefits include 'access to a multi-faceted support network', managing the risk of the supervisee becoming intellectually enclosed in their supervisor's approach, and providing further opportunities for the development of supervisors. As a consequence, the team recommends it desirable for the Institute to review supervisory arrangements for postgraduate research students to secure the advantages of the supervisory team approach outlined in section 1 of the *Code of practice*.

151   The audit team was provided with details of the Supervision Development Programme 2008-09 and of the Developing Your Skills in Doctoral Supervision 2009-10. The programme for 2008-09 was fuller but that for 2009-10 can be assumed to be still developing. In both cases sessions on basic skills are available alongside refresher sessions on particular issues; sessions are made available at convenient times and at a length geared to achieving maximum take-up.

Progress and review arrangements

152   The Institute's Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2009-10 sets out the broad framework for progress and review of PGR students. For those registered for an MPhil/PhD this includes: the 'upgrade' process by which students are registered for a PhD; the annual progress review system; and a 'candidacy' process (paragraph 155) which precedes the submission of the thesis. The Institute aims for processes for EdD students which are as parallel as possible. Students are registered for the EdD from the start but the upgrade process is paralleled by a review that takes place after completion of the training courses and after the Institution-Focussed Study.

153   The MPhil/PhD Student Handbook 2009/2010 sets out the annual review process for students, and parallel information is provided in the 'Notes of Guidance' provided on the Doctoral School website. The review begins with a self-assessment by the student; the supervisor also records their views in a separate report. Each sees the other's report before the supervisor signs the joint report to signal completion of the first stage. The reports are then reviewed by the student's Advisory Panel, but also by the Faculty Director of PGR. The student may take the

advice of the faculty PGR Committee on any serious issues raised by the reports, before submitting the faculty's reports for final review by Doctoral School. As with the application process, the resulting process has the advantage of ensuring review of the student's progress from a range of points of view.

154   The upgrade process is similarly robust. Details again are freely available to students as soon as they have registered through the handbook and the Doctoral School website. The submission required from a student is substantial including draft chapter/s and a plan of the thesis as a whole. The submission is reviewed by a panel of three which includes at least one reviewer who has had no direct contact with the student. As well as the decision to upgrade or not, a joint developmentally focused report is provided afterwards for the student. There are procedures for resubmission if the work is not adequate.

155   The 'candidacy' process which precedes the submission of the thesis is equally thorough and includes review of the draft by the supervisor or a member of the Advisory Panel and by a member of staff who has not had previous involvement with the student. Students are required to make a public presentation of their work at the Doctoral School Conference or a departmental seminar series, and there is a mock viva. Opportunities for advice and guidance are thus matched by objective review in a way that enables the best outcome for the student.

156   The process for monitoring of progress of EdD students makes use of the Annual Monitoring process but supplemented by progress reviews at each stage of study. EdD students are allocated to a supervisor at the beginning of their studies on the basis of their thesis proposals, and the supervisor plays an increasingly important role as the student progresses.

157   Overall, the audit team judged these processes robust and well suited both to providing developmental advice for students who are on track, and to detecting and dealing with problems that may have arisen.

Development of research and other skills

158   The Institute's Code indicates the responsibilities of the student and the supervisor in relation to what is described as 'doctoral training and research training' to signal that it involves more than simply training directed towards completion of the PhD. The breadth of opportunities open to PGR students is evident in the MPhil/PhD Research Training Programme 2009-2010 which provides evidence of the links between the Institute's renewal of its teaching mission and research.

159   PGR students are encouraged to compile their training progress as a Personal Training and Development Portfolio. Students also have access to the Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network, a collaboration between eight colleges of the University of London based in the Bloomsbury area and including Birkbeck College and University College London. The audit team noted that the distinctive nature of the Institute and its student body provides significant opportunities for PGR students (and especially EdD students) to be involved in informal mentoring and personal development through interaction with other students who may often be significantly advanced in a professional career.

Feedback mechanisms

160   The Institute collects feedback from PGR students by informal and formal means. The close relationships fostered between students and their supervisors provides a first means for collecting feedback, supplemented by information provided as part of the annual monitoring process. Advisory panels review students' annual monitoring reports at a degree of distance from the supervisor/student relationship and are thus able also to detect issues which the department or faculty might wish to address. The Doctoral School has particular responsibility for the research environment in the Institute. The School collects feedback through the Doctoral Students

Consultative Committee. The Institute entered into the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey in 2008. Through a combination of circumstances in 2009, however, the Institute sought feedback through its own analogous questionnaire collating the outputs with the national outcomes.

Assessment (including assessment policy, regulations and external examining)

161   PGR degrees are now awarded under the Institute's own regulations but there are still some students originally registered when the Institute was subject to the University of London requirements. The audit team found that arrangements for the change were well documented, for example in the MPhil/PhD Handbook. Students preparing to submit their theses for examination engage with what the Institute describes as 'candidacy' (paragraph 155). The student has the responsibility in making the decision to submit their thesis for examination, but the submission form must be signed by the supervisor/s; this is again beneficial in reducing the risk of inappropriate submissions and failure.

162   The format of the examination is regulated with rules freely available to students in the Handbook. Examiners must be approved by the Board of Examiners for Doctoral Award, and an Independent Chair is appointed. Judgements are made according to publicly stated and appropriately discriminating criteria. Results of examinations are reviewed by the Board of Examiners. The independent chair is appointed 'as a neutral observer and a guarantor of fair play'; the fact that the independent chair has explicitly 'no role in the academic content of the examination' provides clarity in the role. The audit team found it inconsistent that the independent chair withdraws with the student when the examiners discuss their decision, and it is not clear that in this context they can fully carry out the role laid out for them. The team therefore recommends it desirable for the Institute to review the use of independent chairs to further secure fairness and consistency in postgraduate research examination boards.

Representations, complaints, and appeals

163   The Institute provides PGR students with appropriate opportunities to register a complaint. One immediate route - particularly appropriate where the complaint is about a feature of the Institute's system - is the annual monitoring process. A comment made here will be reviewed by the Faculty Director of PGR Students and seen by the Doctoral School. The matrix structure is valuable if the complaint is about a supervisor; a student can contact either the Faculty Director of PGR Programmes or a member of Doctoral School staff. The Code of Practice recognises that there are occasions where a change of supervisor will be advisable and sets out a procedure with responsibility resting with the Faculty Director of PGR Students. A student who remains dissatisfied may also follow the procedure for complaints set out in the Student Guide to Institute Policies and Procedures where final recourse is to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

164   Procedures are in place to enable students to appeal against specific academic decisions, including those arising from progress review. The processes to be followed if an MPhil student wishes to appeal against a decision on upgrading, or if an EdD or DEdPys wishes to appeal against a decision arising from assessment in the first stages of their studies, are set out in the Regulations governing representations against decisions of boards of examiners.

165   In summary the audit team judged that, with the two caveats referred to above on supervision and the role of independent chairs, the Institute's arrangements for postgraduate research students provide an appropriate student experience and meet the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes*.

Section 7: Published information

166   The Institute has specified a systematic approach to ensuring the accuracy of information that is provided to students. The approach is determined by the Marketing team and based on provision of information by each programme team, this is checked at key strategic points in its development, typesetting, formatting and printing over several iterations, using a prescribed timeline and project plan. Information made available by partners is checked by the programme team and marketing personnel.

167   Material on the student information web pages was scrutinised by the audit team. This included course information pages on the Institute portal linked to additional useful material about fees and financial support and in most cases, but not all, to comprehensive and well written programme specifications. Student handbooks for the Institute and for programmes of study were reviewed in electronic and paper based formats and found to be comprehensive and written in an accessible style and language. An excellent induction guide and an induction programme for home and international students were scrutinised. Programme directories for initial teacher training, masters and professional development programmes and research degrees are informative and clearly presented. The audit team reviewed material about the Institute that is published on the Unistats website which was found to contain required information except in one instance, where the sample size was too small. The National Student Survey results whilst reporting highly positive satisfaction rates are based on a very small number of undergraduate students, consistent with the Institute profile of students, where few study at undergraduate level.

168   Discussion with students confirmed the usefulness and accuracy of these items of key information. Students reported that the student information web pages and published hard copy materials are informative, accurate and helpful and borne out in practice. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with responsive and timely support from staff such as programme leaders, programme administrators and the international students' officer. Students stated that their expectations based on information gathered in advance was either met or exceeded. On reviewing the information and responses to it, the audit team considered that the provision of course information to students through the portal and through advice of programme leaders and administrators was a feature of good practice.

169   There is no publicly available list of collaborative provision as expected in section 2 of the *Code*. A database of collaborative partnerships provided by the Quality Assurance Unit for the audit team was not up to date nor did it contain an accurate and detailed record of the provision. Key items of information such as the original approval date were omitted and the names of programmes and titles of awards were not presented in a formal and consistent way. Variants of the titles of some programmes were used in documentation which led to some confusion for the team. The team was advised that listings of international activity on the web pages were not always up-to-date nor an accurate description of partnerships in some international arenas.

170   Not all partnership programmes, joint awards and dual awards are described in a publicly available programme specification provided via the Institute web pages and so the Institute is not fulfilling another of the stipulations of section 2 of the *Code*. The audit team therefore recommends it advisable for the Institute to ensure an up-to-date and authoritative listing of collaborative provision is publicly available.

171   At meetings with the audit team, the students were uncertain about the extent to which they see the full reports of external examiners. However, the external examiners reports are thoroughly considered by programme teams at their meetings, to which students are invited. The student representatives who choose to attend the Teaching Committee and Senate can participate in a discussion of the individual reports. Hence the opportunity exists for students to review external examiner reports under open business of committees within the faculties and at Institute level.

172   Overall, the audit team found that individual items of published information were well written in an accessible style and that students regarded them as accurate and realistic. However, there was scope for the Institute to improve the information that it makes publicly available about its collaborative partnerships, and to ensure that programme specifications are published for all programmes that lead to an award of the Institute.

173   The audit team found that, overall, reliance could reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the Institute of Education publishes about the quality of its educational provision and the standards of its awards.