



# **The London College, UCK**

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

March, 2012

## Key findings about The London College, UCK

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in March 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of Ascentis, Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, Edexcel, and NCFE.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of this awarding body and organisations.

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

### Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the College's effective processes for obtaining student views on their programmes of study and for feeding its response back to them (paragraph 2.8).

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- review all documentation on internal verification so that the responsibilities at subject level are clearly and consistently set out (paragraph 1.9)
- make explicit throughout the committee structure the processes for sharing good practice and focusing on continuous improvement (paragraph 1.11)
- review the website to ensure that it is up to date and accessible (paragraph 3.1)
- monitor the effectiveness of the new approval system for public information (paragraph 3.2).

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

- develop a standardised and consistent approach to departmental self-assessment (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.10)
- extend the use of plagiarism software as a teaching tool to all courses to help develop students' referencing and writing skills (paragraph 1.5)
- give greater consideration to professional body standards in assessment design (paragraph 1.7)
- further develop the voluntary peer observation scheme (paragraph 2.6)
- explore ways of enhancing work-related learning through greater engagement with employers (paragraph 2.19).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at The London College, UCK (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Ascentis, Association of Business Practitioners, Chartered Management Institute, Edexcel, National Association of Licensed Paralegals, and NCFE. The review was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite, Dr Sumesh Dadwal, Mr John Skinner (reviewers) and Dr Daniel Lamont (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the College and its awarding body and organisations, meetings with staff, students, employers and the awarding partners.

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

- Academic Infrastructure.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

The College was established as The London Tutors in 1954 and has developed over the years by recruiting increasing numbers of international students and offering affiliated American degree programmes until 2005. Since 2005, the College has offered UK accredited vocational awards. The College operates from a single building in Notting Hill, London.

The College employs 57 staff, of whom 27 are hourly-paid and 30 have either full or part-time contracts. The College's policy is to move as many staff as possible onto formal contracts. The College has grown rapidly in recent years, moving from 922 students in 2009 to 1,364 students in the current year. Of the current cohort of students, 82 per cent are home students and 17 per cent are overseas students. Of these students, 35 per cent are in receipt of some form of public funding.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations:

### Ascentis

- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Accounting and Finance
- MDip/Pg Cert/PgDip Advertising
- MDip Business Administration
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Civil Engineering
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Computer Engineering
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Computer Science
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Consumer Psychology
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Data Communication and Networking
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Educational Management
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Electrical and Electronic Engineering

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4).

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Graphic Design
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Hospitality and Tourism Management
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip International Business Law
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip International Law
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip International Relations and Diplomacy
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip International Relations and Management
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Journalism
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Information Systems
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Marketing Management
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Mathematics
- MDip/PgCert/PgDip Public Relations

#### **Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality**

- PgCert/PgDip Strategic Management and Leadership
- PgDip Hospitality and Tourism Management

#### **Edexcel**

- HNC/HND Art and Design
- HNC/HND Business
- HNC/HND Computing and Systems Management
- HNC/HND Construction and the Built Environment
- HNC/HND Construction and the Built Environment (Civil Engineering)
- HNC/HND Creative Media Production
- HNC/HND Creative Media Production (Computer Game design)
- HNC/HND Creative Media Production (Journalism)
- HNC/HND Electrical Engineering
- HNC/HND Electronic Engineering
- HNC/HND Electronic and Electrical Engineering
- HNC/HND General Engineering
- HNC/HND Graphic Design
- HNC/HND Health and Social Care
- HNC/HND Hospitality Management
- HNC/HND Interactive Media
- HNC/HND Travel and Tourism Management

#### **NCFE**

- Foundation Diploma in Psychology and Social Sciences
- Foundation Diploma in Medical and Health Sciences
- Foundation Diploma in Media and Humanities
- Foundation Diploma in Engineering Science
- Foundation Diploma in Art and Design
- Foundation Diploma in Business
- Foundation Diploma in Law

### **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The College is not responsible for the content of the curriculum which it offers and has to offer the core modules for all its programmes as prescribed by the awarding body and organisations. It is, however, able to select the optional modules that it will offer from the awarding body and organisations' curricula. The College operates all assessment and examination committees, but all external examiners and verifiers are appointed by the awarding body and organisations, who receive their reports.

The College's main responsibilities lie in the teaching and delivery of the curriculum. The management and enhancement of the quality of students' learning opportunities are wholly the responsibility of the College. Therefore, the College designs and approves schemes of work for all modules. It is the College's responsibility to provide the necessary resources to support the students' learning and pastoral care.

## **Recent developments**

The long-standing Principal died in 2011 and was replaced by a new Principal at the beginning of February 2012. The new Principal has reviewed the academic operations of the College and introduced a new management and committee structure. These were in the course of being implemented at the time of the review visit. A further development is the decision to transfer the provision accredited and validated by Ascentis to the Association of Business Practitioners. This process started in September 2011.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The students prepared a student submission in the form of a video. This was produced by the students themselves, drawing on the skills of students on relevant courses. Students were present at both the preparatory meeting and review visit itself. The review team found the students' contribution informative.

## Detailed findings about The London College, UCK

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College's delegated responsibilities differ between its awarding partners. Substantial responsibilities have been delegated to the College, including student recruitment, selection admissions guidance, and induction. The responsibility for setting, first marking, and giving feedback on assignments is delegated to the College, with the exception of the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality which shares the responsibility for first marking with the College. All its awarding partners require the College to provide students with academic guidance and tutorial support, to collect student feedback and to act upon it to enhance the provision. Moderation, or second marking, is either a shared responsibility or conducted by the awarding body or organisation. External examiners for all programmes are appointed and regulated by the policies of the awarding body and organisations. The College uses the programme specifications and statements of learning outcomes provided by its awarding partners, with the exception of NCFE which delegates the specification of the curriculum to the College.

1.2 Responsibilities for the oversight of higher education are clearly defined in the Quality Assurance and Operations Handbook and the awarding partners are satisfied with the College's arrangements. The responsibilities and lines of reporting are clearly identified. The management structure has recently been revised on the appointment of a new Principal and Academic Dean. He is supported by five heads of department. In the four largest departments, the heads are assisted by programme leaders who are responsible for day-to-day programme management, student liaison and pastoral matters. All programmes are subject to annual monitoring and the internal verifiers have a key role in analysing completed monitoring reports, and checking that actions are taken. The Director of Admissions and Quality, the two internal verifiers and the Examinations Officer form the Quality Team which oversees the monitoring process and reports to the Quality and Standards Committee. The College's responsibilities are effectively discharged.

1.3 Departmental self-assessment reports were completed in January 2012 for the first time, identifying strengths, weaknesses and actions required. However, no common methodology or analytical framework was used. In the light of its intention to conduct these self-assessments and action plans annually, it is desirable that the College should develop a standardised and consistent approach at departmental level. This would ensure consistency of reporting as a basis for a college-wide self-assessment report and action planning.

1.4 The Quality and Standards Committee, reporting to the Academic Board, has been established as part of the recently reformed committee structure with a clear brief to oversee the setting, maintaining and monitoring of academic standards. It has subcommittees for examinations, staff-student liaison, and departmental quality assurance. At the time of the visit, no meetings had yet been held.

1.5 The College informs students about its academic writing and plagiarism policy through the virtual learning environment. This is further reinforced during induction and teaching sessions. The College intends to use plagiarism monitoring software, provided through one awarding partner as a teaching tool in order to develop students' referencing and writing skills. It is desirable that a similar approach is extended to all courses.

## **How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?**

1.6 The College draws effectively upon a range of reference points. In particular, programme specifications have been devised to reflect sector and professional standards, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and subject benchmark statements. Staff have received training on the requirements of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*), whose precepts informed a recent review of the College's Quality Assurance and Operations Handbook. The process of annual monitoring is guided by the *Code of practice* along with the requirements of the awarding body and organisations.

1.7 Staff attend awarding body and organisations' briefings in order to keep up to date on standards' requirements. In addition, many have links with industry, which provide a reference point in setting academic standards and engaging with professional requirements. While the College makes some good use of external reference points to secure academic standards, it does not fully engage with them. In particular, there is no specific engagement with professional body standards. Accreditation of programmes by professional bodies is secured by the awarding partners and not the College. It would be desirable for the College to develop greater engagement with professional bodies so that the design of assessments fully reflects their standards and expectations.

## **How does the provider use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?**

1.8 The College has an established process for internal and external verification, which ensures that the curriculum and assessment methods achieve appropriate academic standards. The Internal Verifier Handbook documents the moderation procedures and these are clearly understood by staff. Internal verifiers have a central role in the assurance of standards in the College. The awarding body and organisations are satisfied that the College is effectively carrying out its responsibilities regarding verification.

1.9 External verifiers sample students' work and provide a report which is distributed to department heads. Such reports may contain recommendations and the internal verifiers assist course tutors in the preparation of an action plan. Where recommendations have wider implications for the College, they are considered through the committee structure. Overall, the team found that external verifiers' reports confirm that appropriate systems are in place for internal verification, assessment and feedback. External verifiers have noted, however, some variation in the consistency of marking and the use of grading and assessment criteria, indicating a need for more rigour in the internal verification process. While the College has addressed this, the team noted that there was inconsistency in the documentation on responsibilities for the conduct of verification in certain subject specialisms at programme level. Evidence was provided by the College which indicated that subject specialists are being used for verification. It is advisable that the College reviews all documentation on internal verification so that the responsibilities at subject level are clearly and consistently set out.

1.10 The College has evaluated the effectiveness of its structures and processes through reflection on the internal verification process and reports from external verifiers in departmental meetings and departmental self-assessment reports. The role of the new Departmental Quality Assurance Committees includes oversight of module and programme monitoring. They report to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

1.11 Good practice is shared through a number of systems and processes. Identification of good teaching and assessment practice emanates from the verification process, and this

is discussed and shared in departmental meetings. In addition, part-time staff who teach at other institutions or who have current industrial experience share this with colleagues. The team agrees that the weekly meetings of heads of departments have the potential for sharing good practice. There is no clear mechanism to achieve this as the terms of reference of committees in the revised structure no longer include a requirement to focus on continuous improvement. The team agreed that it is important to include this feature in order to ensure that standards are maintained in the future. It is therefore advisable that the College clearly states its processes for sharing good practice and focusing on continuous improvement throughout the committee structure and makes these explicit, possibly by reviewing terms of reference.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 As outlined in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2, the awarding body and organisations have delegated substantial responsibilities to the College. It fulfils its responsibilities to the awarding body and organisations by effective systems for course reporting and monitoring.

2.2 Each of the awarding partners expects the College to ensure that the staff teach and assess appropriately for higher education and have opportunities for updating and scholarship. All its awarding partners give the College the responsibility for involving employers in the programmes of study. NCFE devolves wider responsibilities to the College for its programmes, including the identification of curriculum need, curriculum development, programme specifications and intended learning outcomes. The team confirms that the College has effective systems for monitoring teaching and assessment, and provides staff development opportunities.

### How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.3 The College engages effectively with the Academic Infrastructure in its management of learning opportunities. The College's Quality Assurance and Operations Handbook reflects the relevant sections of the *Code of practice* to ensure consistency and uniformity of practice and procedure across the departments. External examiners' reports consider that assessment is appropriate and consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. The sample of student work seen by the review team confirmed that external reference points are used effectively in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities.

2.4 The College is aware of the relevant subject benchmark statements for its provision. It understands that the awarding body and organisations account for these in the design of their programmes and that the College's teaching and learning is designed to meet those requirements.



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

2.5 The College has a well designed effective teaching and learning strategy, which is mostly implemented by a widely experienced and well qualified teaching staff. With the increase in student numbers the College plans to appoint more staff. Heads of department are responsible for ensuring that staff are fully briefed regarding their input into the curriculum. New staff are required to attend an induction course and they are also all observed and appraised by their head of department. All assignments set by these staff are fully checked by the College's internal verifiers. This support system for new staff seems to be effective.

2.6 The College has established an effective appraisal and observation scheme linked to staff development, which is undertaken by the line manager and applies to all staff teaching over six hours per week. This is in addition to the observation of new staff. There is also a voluntary peer observation scheme, offering mentoring arrangements between staff. However, as yet it has only generated limited interest. It would be desirable for the College to expand and develop this scheme to involve all staff. This would support the enhancement of teaching and in this way it would facilitate the implementation of the teaching and learning strategy.

2.7 Students appreciate the variety of teaching and learning methods and the support that they receive. In their teaching, staff use a variety of delivery methods, including case studies, exercises, experiments, role plays, class debates, textbook and lecture notes. The high level of student retention and satisfaction is a measure of the quality of teaching and learning. Moreover, the external examiners' reports comment favourably on the teaching that the College provides as reflected in the quality of students' work.

2.8 Students' views are continually provided through anonymous modular feedback, which the Quality Team assesses and reports to the Academic Board, with a summary to the Senior Management Team. Student representatives are members of the Governing Body, Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee, and are encouraged by senior management to engage fully with the new management and committee structure. The College is working to develop further ways of capturing student views. The Principal and Academic Dean has instigated a regular blog on the College's virtual learning environment and there are plans to introduce a cross-college survey that replicates the National Student Survey. Students indicated that the courses that they are following are relevant and will form the basis for improving their employment and career prospects. The College's processes for obtaining student views and feeding the College's response back to them represents good practice.

## **How does the provider assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.9 Before entry, all students are given clear advice and guidance on selecting an appropriate course, and induction takes place at the beginning of each semester. Additionally, all overseas students are interviewed either in person or through a webcam link and receive advice regarding visa and entry requirements. The personal tutor system includes regular tutorials for both pastoral and course-related issues that enable staff to track student progress. Where necessary, the Student Welfare Officer arranges additional learning support for students in College or through links with Middlesex University. These processes are effective.

2.10 The College evaluates its support for students at a departmental level via the self-assessment reports. As identified in paragraph 1.3, the coverage in these reports is, however, not consistent between departments and a more systematic approach is desirable

in order to obtain a college-wide perspective. Issues that are identified at departmental level are taken forward for consideration by the relevant committee, in particular the Quality and Standards Committee and the Academic Board.

2.11 The students commented that, despite the growth in student numbers, the College is well resourced, both in its library provision and also computer access. An example of this resourcing is the recent purchase of 40 laptops for use by students on the premises, which has enhanced the provision. This has been welcomed by the students, as has the improvement in wireless access.

2.12 The College collects retention data across its provision. The figures show a year on year improvement in the overall withdrawal of students from an already good figure of around seven per cent in 2009-10 to 2 per cent in 2010-11. The continuing improvement in retention encourages the College to have confidence in the attention that it pays to individual student support.

2.13 The College has suspended its distance learning mode, pending further development of the virtual learning environment to fully support such learning. Most students are full-time, but the part-time students whom the team met confirmed that they are satisfied with the support provided.

### **What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.14 The College encourages and delivers good opportunities for staff development. All staff are encouraged to engage in continual professional development within the College, with the awarding partners, external events, and through their own initiatives. The College supports the staff through allowing time or through financial support. It also provides additional support for sessional staff by offering the City & Guilds teaching qualification through supervision at the College. Three members of staff are due to embark on the Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme in September. Administrative staff have attended courses on health and safety, first aid and customer service.

2.15 Development needs are predominately identified by means of the annual observation and appraisal sessions, although staff may also initiate requests. The heads of department are able to approve staff development when it covers updating from the awarding body and organisations or verification and assessment training. Longer-term development with a greater financial cost is referred to the Quality and Standards Committee for approval. Under the new structure, an annual staff development report is submitted to it and is finally ratified by the Academic Board.

2.16 The Quality and Standards Committee will in future monitor the effectiveness of staff development in relation to teaching and learning, although the terms of reference for that committee are not explicit in this regard. Currently, the College relies upon its improving retention rates, good external examiners' comments and student satisfaction to indicate that staff are both well trained and up to date. Students comment that they are well supported by the expert teaching staff.

2.17 Opportunities for sharing good practice more widely are planned, such as, for example, the first college-wide Staff Development Day to be held in May 2012. The team encourages the College to continue to provide these staff development days. Areas of good practice are also shared with other colleges, as in the case of the Ascentis Foundation programmes, where the College's assignments were recommended for use by other colleges as an example of good practice.

### **How effectively does the provider ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?**

2.18 The College has a well stocked library and an adequate, but improving, computer network with wireless access for students. Students welcome the development of the College's virtual learning environment. The team noted that, at present, the virtual learning environment was primarily used as a noticeboard and repository of course-specific and general information. Although the potential interactive nature of the virtual learning environment remains underdeveloped, the ability to access it assists all students, but particularly those studying part-time, in keeping up to date with their programmes of study.

2.19 The teaching and learning strategy reflects the College's focus on employability as an important feature of its programmes. However, as a consequence of legislation affecting overseas students' ability to work in the UK, the provision for course-based work placement has in recent times been reduced. The Health and Social Care programme is the main area in which the College continues to provide either work placements or requires that the students be in employment. In the case of the other programmes, while students are encouraged to find work placements, these are not built into the programme and the team was unclear about the strength of the links with employers. It is desirable that the College should explore ways of enhancing its provision of work-related learning, for example by developing stronger connections with relevant employers.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

## **3 Public information**

### **How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?**

3.1 The College is effective in providing public information, primarily through its website, which is the definitive source of information. Supplementary information is also provided by the prospectus, student handbooks, emails and the virtual learning environment. Email, text messaging and telephone calls are also used as a regular means of communicating with students. Partnership agreements with the awarding body and organisations specify that the College is responsible for providing accurate, complete and timely public information to stakeholders relating to processes of pre-admission, post-admission, teaching and learning, assessment and feedback from the awarding body and organisations. On the College website, however, there are both dynamic and static pages, and the latter are not always up to date. Additionally, the website is not always easy to navigate. Given both the variety and number of programmes of study offered and the increasing number of students, it is advisable that the College reviews its website and other sources of public information on a frequent basis to ensure ease of use and that all pages are kept up to date.

### **How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing**

3.2 The College has processes for assuring the accuracy of public information. There is a policy statement on public information, albeit very brief, and a clear procedure for managing it. On the day of the visit, the reviewers were informed about a modified structure

and given a procedural chart for managing public information. This establishes a procedure whereby information is generated at programme levels, passed up through the management structure until it is finally signed off by the Principal/Academic Dean. The Information Technology Manager/Virtual Learning Environment Coordinator is responsible for information about academic matters on the College website and printed material. This new process of managing public information is welcome and timely since, in addition to some outdated or incomplete information, there is inconsistency between the website and printed material. The College now proposes daily and weekly schedules for checking and managing public information. It is advisable that the new approval system is monitored for its effectiveness to ensure that there is proper version control over public information.

3.3 The College publishes a range of marketing materials for its courses online, for which the Information Technology Department is mainly responsible. The College is taking action to review the wording of its published material in order to ensure that exaggerated claims are not made. The students' role in generating public information is developing, for example through the student magazine, and this is to be encouraged.

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

The London College, UCK action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight March 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's effective processes for obtaining student views on their programmes of study and for feeding its response back to them (paragraph 2.8).</li> </ul>	The College will further enhance responding to the student voice by introducing a questionnaire equivalent to the National Student Survey	April 2013	Student Support team/Director of Quality	Greater than 70 per cent response rate	Principal/Academic Dean	Via Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Student Staff Consultative Committee
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review all documentation on internal verification so that the responsibilities at <u>subject level are</u></li> </ul>	Review all documentation on internal verification so that the responsibilities at <u>subject level are</u>	May 2013	Internal verification team/ heads of department	Use of grading consistent across all subject areas  Spot checks and audits to confirm	Director of Quality	Departmental Quality Assurance Committees, Examinations Boards and Quality and

<sup>3</sup> The provider has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the provider's awarding body and organisations.

clearly and consistently set out (paragraph 1.9)	clearly and consistently set out					Standards Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make explicit throughout the committee structure the processes for sharing good practice and focusing on continuous improvement (paragraph 1.11)</li> </ul>	<p>Regular departmental opportunities to share good practice</p> <p>Staff attendance at conferences to deliver papers on good practice developed</p> <p>Annual sharing of good practice conference at the College</p>	September 2013	Heads of department/ Director of Quality	<p>Minute evidence of sharing of good practice and this is reflected in enhanced teaching observations and development of peer observation</p> <p>Papers delivered at conferences</p> <p>Annual conference</p>	Principal	Departmental Quality Assurance Committees and Quality and Standards Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the website to ensure that it is up to date and accessible (paragraph 3.1)</li> </ul>	Full implementation of College checking process with daily, weekly and monthly audits	May 2013	Moodle Coordinator/ IT Technician	Audit reports from checks	Director of Quality	Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the effectiveness of the new approval system for public information (paragraph 3.2).</li> </ul>	<p>Implementation of checking process for approval of public information</p> <p>Monthly checks of the system</p>	September 2013	Heads of department/ Director of Quality	<p>Checking reports</p> <p>Audits of public information</p>	Principal	Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Board

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a standardised and consistent approach to departmental self-assessment (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.10)</li> </ul>	A standard pro forma developed for departmental self-assessment and implemented in 2012-13	May 2013	Heads of department	Consistent set of departmental self-assessment documents and analysis	Director of Quality	Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extend the use of plagiarism software as a teaching tool to all courses to help develop students' referencing and writing skills (paragraph 1.5)</li> </ul>	Implement plagiarism software across all programmes	May 2013	IT Technician/ heads of department	Samples of student work examined by internal verification team	Director of Quality	Departmental Quality Assurance Committees, Quality and Standards Committee, and Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give greater consideration to professional body standards in assessment design (paragraph 1.7)</li> </ul>	Review all programmes offered and seek to align more closely with professional standards and attempt to secure professional recognition where possible	July 2013	Heads of department	<p>Closer working relationships in engineering, hospitality and tourism, journalism, and health and social care</p> <p>Professional accreditation in at least one</p>	Principal	Departmental Quality Assurance Committees, Quality and Standards Committee, and Academic Board

				programme		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further develop the voluntary peer observation scheme (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	All full-time teaching staff involved in peer observation with 50 per cent of part-time staff	September 2013	Heads of department	Peer review evaluations  Teacher observation scheme  Appraisal outcomes	Director of Quality	Departmental Quality Assurance Committees, Quality and Standards Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore ways of enhancing work-related learning through greater engagement with employers (paragraph 2.19).</li> </ul>	Explore work placements in vocational areas, such as travel and tourism, journalism, and engineering  Develop distance learning offer	September 2013	Heads of department	At least 100 students on work-related activities and increased distance learning provision by 50 per cent	Director of Quality	Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Board



## About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4).

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook<sup>4</sup>](#)

**Academic Infrastructure** Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

**academic quality** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

**academic standards** The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

**awarding body** A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

**awarding organisation** An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

**Code of practice** *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

**enhancement** Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

**feature of good practice** A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

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

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

---

<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

*The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.*

**highly trusted sponsor** An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

**learning opportunities** The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

**learning outcome** What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

**operational definition** A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

**programme (of study)** An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

**programme specifications** Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes of study**, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

**provider** An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

**reference points** Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**subject benchmark statement** A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

**threshold academic standard** The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

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

**RG 926 06/12**

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Fax 01452 557070  
Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 577 7

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)