QAA

Gemal College

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

April 2012

Key findings about Gemal College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in April 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 the Association of Business Executives, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, British Computer Society, City & Guilds, Edexcel, Education for Business Managers and Administrators, Institute of Administrative Management, and Institute of Leadership & Management.

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 these 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 mapping of College policies and procedures to the *Code of practice* and the UK Quality Code (paragraphs 1.8, 2.4)
- the thoroughness of the student induction process, which is informed by student input (paragraph 2.7)
- the extensive involvement of students in College quality assurance processes (paragraph 2.9)
- the support given to the production of the student magazine (paragraph 3.4)
- the systematic approach to, and involvement of students in, the Public Information Audit (paragraph 3.8).

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:

- ensure that the management and new committee structures, terms of reference, job descriptions and the Centre Quality Handbook are consistent, fully specified and understood by staff (paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 3.3)
- ensure that the reformulated Academic Board and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee are implemented fully and promptly (paragraph 2.1)
- provide students with clear guidance on writing for academic purposes (paragraph 2.10)
- implement the findings of the Public Information Audit promptly (paragraphs 3.6, 3.7).

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

- introduce a more systematic approach to the identification and sharing of good practice (paragraphs 2.11, 2.12).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](2) at Gemal College (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 the Association of Business Executives, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, British Computer Society, City & Guilds, Edexcel, Education for Business Managers and Administrators, Institute of Administrative Management, and Institute of Leadership & Management. The review was carried out by Professor David Eastwood, Mr Paul McGrath, Mrs Sue Miller (reviewers) and Mr Jeff Butel (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding body and organisations, meetings with staff, students, reports of reviews by QAA and inspection by the British Accreditation Council.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- guidance from the awarding body and organisations.

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

Gemal College (the College), established in January 2000, occupies one site in Finsbury Park, north London. At the time of the review, it had around 160 students enrolled on 10 programmes, at levels 4, 5 and 6, of eight awarding partners. During the absence of the Principal on long-term sick leave, the College is managed by two Duty Principals: one is the co-founder and now sole owner and Director, and the other is the Business Development and Quality Assurance Manager appointed in February 2012. Students are drawn from a wide range of countries. There are 20 staff, of whom 12 (including the absent Principal) are full-time, representing a total of 15 full-time equivalents. Many staff combine administrative and teaching commitments.

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

Association of Business Executives
- Diploma in Travel and Tourism Management (level 5) (3 students)

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
- Level 6 (9 students)

British Computer Society
- Diploma in Information Technology (level 5) (9 students)

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

City & Guilds
- Higher Professional Diploma in Health and Well-being (level 4) (40 students)

Edexcel
- HND in Health and Social Care (level 5) (19 students)

Education for Business Managers and Administrators
- Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (level 6) (14 students)
- Graduate Diploma in Health and Social Care Management (level 6) (31students)

Institute of Administrative Management
- Diploma in Business and Administrative Management (level 4) (8 students)
- Advanced Diploma in Business and Administrative Management (level 5) (14 students)

Institute of Leadership and Management
- Diploma in Leadership and Management (level 5) (15 students).

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College states that it is responsible for the recruitment of students, resourcing, delivery of the curriculum, including provision of teaching material, although some awarding partners provide additional teaching material. The assessment regimes vary by the awarding body or organisation. One sets assignment-based assessments and requires the College to mark these prior to moderating the results. Three require the College to design and mark assignment-based assessments, which are then moderated by the awarding partners. For others, the College has little or no direct involvement in the summative assessment process.

Recent developments

In September 2011, the College acquired four additional classrooms, extended the administrative office and provided a much larger student common room. Meeting structures were revised in April 2012. Development of the virtual learning environment, established in September 2010, is continuing. In February to April 2012, the College website and prospectus were revised, and a Public Information Audit completed in April 2012.

There has been a decline in the student intake since 2010, which the College attributes to changes in the UK Border Agency regulations. The College has recently had its Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies limit increased by the UK Border Agency, pending the outcome of its application for highly trusted sponsor status. The College is now focusing on expanding its portfolio to target a broader cross-section of international students and non-visa students.

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 student submission included a videotape and written material. The College facilitated the production of both by preparing questions drawn from QAA guidance (*REO and the student submission*, September 2011). The College encouraged students to be critical and did not control the content of the submissions. In addition, students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the team during the visit. The team found the student submission and the meeting with students extremely helpful.

Detailed findings about Gemal College

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The College delivers 10 higher education programmes at levels 4, 5 and 6 in the areas of business, health and IT effectively, in collaboration with eight awarding partners. While each awarding body or organisation is responsible for the design and approval of its curriculum, the College is responsible for the recruitment of students, resourcing, teaching material and the delivery of the curriculum. Where the College has responsibility for designing assignments and marking students' work, this is subject to internal and external moderation. Some programmes are relatively recent College offerings and these assessment and awarding regimes have yet to be fully exercised.

1.2   Overall responsibility for fulfilling the awarding body and organisations' requirements rests with the Director of Quality Assurance/Duty Principal, who liaises with the relevant teaching team through the Director of Studies and the two heads of department as appropriate. This activity is supported by the recently appointed Business Development and Quality Manager/Duty Principal, who is responsible for the development of new relationships with the awarding body and organisations, and is developing strategic quality assurance systems and related documentation to further underpin the College in meeting its responsibilities. This is effective in facilitating teaching staff, in conjunction with the responsible Head of Department, to deliver teaching informed by the awarding body and organisations' curriculum specification. This activity is further supported through departmental and staff meetings, which ensure the full understanding of the awarding body and organisations' requirements and approve teaching plans, related material and assessment regimes.

1.3   The Director of Administration, who reports to the Director of Quality Assurance/Duty Principal, is responsible for student admissions and maintaining accurate student records. These activities are undertaken effectively by a team of administrators informed by a set of clearly specified policies and procedures.

1.4   A recent innovation is the production of a Centre Quality Handbook, which includes the evolving policies and procedures that support the College's quality assurance processes. However, given the recent introduction of some policies, their effectiveness cannot, as yet, be evaluated. Ensuring easy staff access to the Centre Quality Handbook is important if they are to be informed fully of College policies and procedures. This may be effected by making the Handbook an adjunct to the Staff Handbook.

1.5   The College now requires the Director of Studies in conjunction with the Head of Department to produce an annual report for each programme. Extended scrutiny occurs for programmes that have been introduced recently, have large cohorts and/or are underperforming according to given criteria. These reports have been considered by the Academic Board/Advisory Board. However, it is unclear what actions have ensued as the continuity of these various meetings and overall coherence is difficult to discern, including the relationship between the Academic Board and the Advisory Board.

1.6   The College fulfils the requirements of its awarding body and organisations. Previous practice has been to discharge these obligations on a reactive programme-by-programme basis without explicitly taking a college-wide perspective of activities and emerging issues. Until recently, management and committee structures

have inhibited such holistic considerations. The College anticipates that the very recently reconstituted Academic Board, along with the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, which will be chaired by the Director of Quality Assurance and include student representation, will do much to address these acknowledged weaknesses. It is advisable that the management and new committee structures, terms of reference, job descriptions and the Centre Quality Handbook are consistent, specified fully and understood by staff to strengthen coordination of College-wide quality assurance and enhancement activities.

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

1.7   The College has chosen to engage with the awarding body and organisations whose programmes have been benchmarked against the Qualifications and Credit Framework either as recognised bodies in their own right or through an existing recognised body such as Qualifications Network UK.

1.8   The College has recently initiated a mapping of its practices against the Academic Infrastructure and its replacement, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. To date, it has mapped its admissions processes to the *Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*)*, Section 10: Admissions to higher education* and the assessment of students on the Edexcel and Institute of Administrative Management programmes to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. This mapping exercise is good practice.

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

1.9   For the awarding partners that delegate assessment design to the College, programme teams have effective internal verification mechanisms to ensure that assessments enable students to evidence fulfilment of intended learning outcomes. These mechanisms have evolved over time, drawing upon feedback from external verifiers. Flow charts accompany policies for these programmes to help staff engage effectively with these processes. The College assessment boards, the outcomes of which are subject to external moderation, are required by some awarding partners. Programme teams respond positively to external verifiers' comments, which are facilitated through documented team meetings.

1.10   While there is no explicit College statement on plagiarism or assessment malpractice, staff are vigilant in deterring such activity. Three programmes require the awarding partners' examinations to be held on the College's premises. Under the direction of the Director of Studies, the College arrangements meet the requirements of the relevant awarding body or organisations. The College assessment instruments are reviewed and internally verified annually in line with both the awarding partners and College requirements. External examiners/verifiers' reports are generally complimentary about the assessment instruments, criteria and outcomes.

1.11   Until very recently, the College had not evaluated its own effectiveness explicitly. Previously, it had relied upon each awarding body or organisation to highlight any issues that required addressing. Review for Educational Oversight has given the College impetus to engage a new Business Development and Quality Assurance Manager on a project basis to undertake a review of College operations and capability. There are signs that new structures and processes are bringing about positive systemic change in the way the College operates. These include the introduction of programme level reports and terms of reference for the revamped and new committees and meetings.

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 Based on the College's Self-Evaluation Report 2012, annual programme monitoring reports are collated by the Director of Studies before being forwarded for consideration by the College's Academic Board. There is little documentary evidence, however, of this procedure in practice. The College is in the process of reconfiguring its committee system to include the provision of a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee with the responsibility for overseeing the annual programme monitoring process. It is advisable that the College ensures the early and full implementation of the reformulated Academic Board and the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.

2.2 In general, all awarding partners employ a system of external examination/ verification to ensure that the College fulfils their requirements for the quality of learning opportunities. External examiners/verifiers and standards verifiers' reports confirm that the College is meeting these requirements.

2.3 The College's Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure, which the College states is applicable to 'all higher education programmes', appears to be drafted specifically to meet Edexcel requirements. First produced in February 2012, the effectiveness of this policy remains to be evaluated. The College operates an annual quality assessment cycle. Collated at Head of Department level, Annual Programme Level Reports monitor annual programme data on issues such as student progress, student and external examiners/ verifiers' feedback, resourcing, peer observation and training needs. A parallel reporting process, the Programme Level Supplementary Report, has been introduced recently in order to provide continuing self-evaluation commentary.

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

2.4 The College engages with a wide variety of external reference points, including the awarding body and organisations' requirements, the *Code of practice* and the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The College Equality and Diversity Policy is aimed at reducing barriers to learning, especially for international students. The College is in the process of embedding equality and diversity at all levels, reflecting the *Code of practice*, *Section 3: Disabled students*.

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

2.5 The College places considerable emphasis on staff holding or obtaining suitable teaching qualifications, such as Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector and Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector. The College Peer Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy and Procedure is designed to enhance professional development and spread good practice in teaching. Lesson observations take place at least once a year or more frequently if student feedback gives rise to concerns. Students informed

the team that their feedback had led to the replacement of a member of staff whose teaching they considered unsatisfactory.

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

2.6   The College's recently redesigned Admissions Policy was developed to ensure student provision of 'sufficient information, advice and guidance' to make an informed decision on choice of programme and College. A comprehensive Student Prospectus provides admissions, programme and progression details, together with pastoral information, for example, on living conditions and welfare provisions. Through the Student Welfare Office, the College provides useful extra-curricular student support, such as assistance with accommodation, travel and health services advice. Students are very appreciative of this extra-curricular support.

2.7   The College induction week for new students provides them with important information on support services available and learning resources, such as library facilities and the e-learning zone. Students also complete an initial learner survey to establish any need for additional pre-sessional courses, such as the use of academic English. Students are extremely complimentary about the thoroughness of the induction process and the opportunity for them to inform enhancements to the process. The team considers this to be good practice.

2.8   The College has an effective student-tracking system at programme level, which triggers action on issues such as absenteeism or late submission of work. The College does not operate a formal personal tutor system, but has an effective open-door policy. Students confirm the accessibility of helpful staff advice, including clear and detailed guidance on progression routes, following successful completion of their programme of study at the College. Good staff-student relations are evident throughout the College.

2.9   The College conducts student satisfaction surveys at a programme level and these views are reflected in both staff appraisals and the provision of learning resources. Students confirm that their views are listened to and acted upon, giving them a sense of direct involvement in quality assurance. More formally, a Students Union President represents students' views on the College Advisory Board and at departmental meetings. Enhanced student engagement with College management is an integral part of the College restructuring. The extensive involvement of students in College quality assurance processes is good practice.

2.10   External examiners/verifiers are complimentary about effective and sustainable student support. These views, however, are expressed at a programme, rather than generic, level. The team's review of students' work indicates the need for more support for students on writing for academic purposes, particularly the use of English, including spelling, and more appropriate and academically sound use of referencing.

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

2.11   While the College has a clear commitment to staff development, there have been no explicit processes for identifying good practice systematically across the College. Staff meetings have been used to share knowledge and skills. It is desirable that advantage is taken of the emerging College-wide policies and processes to introduce a more systematic approach to the identification and sharing of good practice. The College Staff Training and Development Policy states that the prime responsibility for training and development rests with the College management. However, it also encourages staff to take responsibility for

their own self-development. The College Staff Handbook clearly details staff development procedures and opportunities.

2.12   The Director of Administration is responsible for the coordination of staff training, including the booking of external training on a needs-basis in consultation with heads of departments. College staff also attend training updates given by the awarding body and organisations. Both organisational and individual training needs are identified as part of the College's performance appraisal process. However, although there is some evidence of this process taking place, this is not structured. The College is currently considering a more integrated linking of staff development to staff appraisal and to a more systematic sharing of good practice. It is desirable that the College introduces a more systematic approach to the identification and sharing of good practice.

2.13   The College provides both time and financial reimbursement for continued professional development activities. The Director of Quality Assurance/Duty Principal encourages staff to undertake these opportunities and gain additional professional qualifications. As a consequence, all teaching staff have obtained the qualification Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. Academic staff are highly qualified and staffing provision is adequate for the current number of students.

2.14   The College has an established induction programme for new academic staff, which includes guidance on the College's quality assurance systems, the awarding body and organisations' expectations, and mentoring and lesson observations by experienced staff. This is followed by annual performance monitoring and appraisal, leading in turn to continued professional development training.

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

2.15   The College has an annual budget for learning resources and considers the provision to be adequately resourced, a view supported by student feedback. Teaching rooms are basic but adequate. Information technology provision is generally adequate, although some augmentation of specialist software for the Diploma in Information Technology programme is required, a situation the College started to address during the visit. Library book provision on-site is limited, but it is supplemented by access to other local, institutional and online library sources, and the awarding body and organisations' provision. However, online journal access remains limited. Consideration is being given to greater use of information and communications technology in teaching and learning, but this is at an embryonic stage and no evidence of progress on this is currently available.

> 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 communicates effectively with the general public through its website and Student Prospectus. Communication with staff and students is effected using a range of handbooks containing programme details, general College information on facilities and

support, policies and procedures. Limited information is available on the e-learning system, which is in development, but the College makes good use of email for internal and external communication. Students confirm they are able to communicate easily with tutors using email.

3.2   Students confirm that the comprehensive advance information they received from the College, through the website, Student Prospectus or telephone contact, was useful in informing their application decisions. They confirm that their experience matches the impression gained from information provided by the College.

3.3   Students receive a Student Handbook, which provides details of College facilities, welfare and support, as well as relevant policies and procedures. Programme specifications, taken from the awarding body and organisations' materials, are provided to students in the form of a programme handbook. For the HND in Health and Social Care, the Programme Handbook is customised to reflect the offer at the College, rather than simply repeat the awarding body's generic material. Students find these handbooks useful, and are encouraged to access the website of the relevant awarding body or organisation for further information. During induction, students are provided with additional material relating to their programme of study, including timetables and assessment schedules. Staff are provided with a staff handbook and have access to the Centre Quality Handbook, although the latter is not included with or linked directly with the former. This may deter staff from ensuring they have an understanding of College quality procedures. These publications provide extensive information, including details on policies and procedures.

3.4   The College facilitates the publication of a student magazine. It does not have any editorial control but provides financial support and production facilities. This magazine provides a forum for students to present articles of interest to them, and to develop skills in presentational English. Although not a formal College production, it helps to convey information about the College in an informal, student-orientated manner and instils a community ethos. The magazine articles are of high quality and offer a diverse range of topics. The support given to the project by the College is good practice.

3.5   The College is developing an e-learning system, but this is still at an early stage. It is being trialled by students and staff from the HND in Health and Social Care. Students confirmed its usefulness, although its content is currently limited. The College intends to develop a fully functioning e-learning resource in order to provide general and programme-specific information and an interactive facility to support student learning.

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

3.6   Production of the website and prospectus has, until recently, been a collaborative project, with contributions from heads of department, the admissions staff and senior management. Programme handbooks have been produced by programme teams and the more general handbooks and information leaflets by a number of staff. This has lead to inconsistency in presentational style, with some omissions, duplications, and typographical errors not addressed during proofreading. Following the recent appointment of the Business Development and Quality Manager, and informed by the recently completed College Public Information Audit, a more rigorous process, intended to address these publication issues, is being introduced.

3.7   The website has recently been audited and amended, and in future all content will be approved by the Business Development and Quality Manager, and/or Director of Administration before publication. A complete overhaul of the design is in preparation in order to improve the marketing potential. The Student Prospectus has undergone a similar

revision and future publications will be subject to more stringent control. Currency of documents is being addressed. More recent versions of policies and procedures include basic document management information with review dates, but existing documents often indicate no publication date, version number, pagination information, or review date. The College is advised to implement the findings of the Public Information Audit promptly to rectify these deficiencies and those identified in paragraph 3.6.

3.8   The Public Information Audit included comment by staff and students. The collated information identifies a number of areas for improvement, mainly around design, but confirms that the information is accurate and complete. Students confirmed their involvement in the audit and the development of the recently introduced Student Handbook. The team considers that the systematic approach to ensuring accuracy and comprehensiveness in public information, demonstrated by the Public Information Audit and the involvement of students in it, represents good practice.

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[3]

Gemal College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight April 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the mapping of College policies and procedures to the *Code of practice* for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraphs 1.8, 2.4)	Complete the mapping process across all plans, policies, procedures and practices	January 2013	Senior Management Team and heads of department	Plans, policies, procedures and practices cross reference relevant indicators from the UK Quality Code Training has been provided on its application at programme level	Business Development and Quality Manager	The mapping process will be reviewed by the Academic Board, Senior Management Team and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee to assess its effectiveness and to consider possible enhancements
• the thoroughness of the student induction process, which is informed by student input (paragraph 2.7)	Ensure that this is introduced and shared as good practice in new programmes and that there is student	September 2012	Heads of Department lead and coordinate	Positive student feedback on induction Effective student involvement and	Senior Management Team	The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee will review the extent of student

[3] 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.

	involvement and engagement in enhancing student induction			engagement in the enhancement of student induction		involvement and engagement in the process It will also review student feedback to inform enhancements to student induction
• the extensive involvement of students in College quality assurance processes (paragraph 2.9)	Ensure sustained involvement of students in quality assurance, and in compliance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B5: Student engagement	January 2013	Senior Management Team	Students are co-opted where necessary across relevant meeting, committee and board structures The terms of reference and purpose are amended accordingly Student contributions inform enhancements to quality assurance processes	Business Development and Quality Manager	The Academic Board and Senior Management Team review the level of student involvement and engagement in the meeting, committee and board structures and the extent to which their contribution informs enhancements to quality assurance processes
• the support given to the production of the student magazine (paragraph 3.4)	Continued support and resources for production of the student magazine More formal student structures (for	October 2012	Welfare Officer and Head of Business and Information Technology	Timely production of future issues of the student magazine Student Editor liaises with the	Director of Administration	Student Editor, together with Director of Administration ensure sufficient support and resources are in

example Student Editor) to ensure the sustainability and currency of the student magazine				Welfare Officer and Head of Business and Information Technology to ensure the content of the magazine is not defamatory, discriminatory or offensive		place Director of Administration reviews the effectiveness of the production of the student magazine
• the systematic approach to, and involvement of students in, the Public Information Audit (paragraph 3.8).	Continued involvement of students in future Public Information Audits	January 2013	Director of Administration	Timely involvement of students in the Public Information Audit Student feedback from the said audit informs enhancements to public information	Business Development and Quality Manager	Senior Management Team and Programme Teams review the findings of the Public Information Audit and student feedback on the same, as well as enhancements carried out, based on the audit
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• ensure that the management and new committee structures, terms of reference, job descriptions and the	Ensure a 'joined-up' approach between cross-college and programme level systems, policies, procedures,	October 2012	Senior Management Team and heads of department	The cross-college and programme level quality systems are effectively linked together	Business Development and Quality Manager Director of Quality Assurance	Senior Management Team reviews the systems as a whole to ensure that a 'joined-up'

Centre Quality Handbook are consistent, fully specified and understood by staff (paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 3.3)	responsibilities and reporting structures			Minutes of meetings demonstrate engagement with quality systems and processes Staff training is provided on quality assurance systems		approach has been implemented
• ensure that the reformulated Academic Board and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee are implemented fully and promptly (paragraph 2.1)	The Academic Board and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee has been fully implemented as of 30 May 2012	30 May 2012	Academic Board and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee	Minutes of meetings (23 May 2012 and 30 May 2012)	Senior Management Team	Senior Management team review the quality and content of minutes against the terms of reference to ensure effective alignment
• provide students with clear guidance on writing for academic purposes (paragraph 2.10)	Develop and rollout workshops, according to need, for writing for academic purposes and have in place a referral system	September 2012	Heads of department	Workshops developed and rolled out and attendance rates are high relative to referral rates	Senior Management Team	Academic Board and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee analyse attendance and referral rates and student feedback
• implement the findings of the Public Information Audit promptly (paragraphs	Sign off the Public Information Audit	July 2012	Business Development and Quality Manager	Sign off	Director of Quality Assurance	Senior Management team review timely sign-off

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
3.6, 3.7).	Continuing updating College website as and when necessary	September 2012	Business Development and Quality Manager	Website is designed and developed	Director of Quality Assurance	Senior Management Team reviews the content and quality of the website
	Further enhancement to existing public information and documentation	August 2012	Director of Administration	Public information and documentation enhanced	Business Development and Quality Manager	Student feedback on information and documentation
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• introduce a more systematic approach to the identification and sharing of good practice (paragraphs 2.11, 2.12).	Audit the outcomes of lesson observations, peer observations, feedback from external verifier/ external examiner visits and student feedback Use these to inform the dissemination and sharing of good practice Use peer observations as a means of sharing good	December 2012	Senior Management Team	Future lesson observations, peer observations and student feedback confirm the embedding of good practice	Director of Quality Assurance	Academic Board reviews internal and external reference points to check the extent to which good practice has been shared

	practice, and act as a means of checking that good practice has been embedded					

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.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: 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. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the
Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook[4]

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:

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[4] 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.