



Anglo-European College of Chiropractic

Institutional Review
by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

May 2012

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About this review

This is a report of an Institutional Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic. The review took place on 7 to 11 May 2012 and was conducted by a team of four reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Gwendolen Bradshaw
- Ms Sarah Macdonald
- Mr Peter Ptashko (student reviewer)
- Mrs Linda Puttick (review secretary).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. In this report the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - threshold academic standards¹
 - the quality of learning opportunities
 - the enhancement of learning opportunities
- provides commentaries on public information and the theme topic
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the institution is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

In reviewing the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic, the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The [theme](#) for the academic year 2011-12 is 'the first year student experience'.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.² Background information about the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic is given at the end of this report. A dedicated page of the website explains the method for [Institutional Review](#) of higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland³ and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents.

¹ For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/pages/default.aspx

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/ireni.aspx

Key findings

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at the College.

QAA's judgements about the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic (the College, the AECC).

- The academic standards of the awards that the College delivers on behalf of its awarding bodies **meet UK expectations** for threshold standards.
- The quality of student learning opportunities at the College **meets UK expectations**.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **meets UK expectations**.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following **features of good practice** at the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic.

- The College makes use of a wide range of UK and European higher education and professional benchmarks for setting and maintaining academic standards, which also support clear progression routes into employment nationally and internationally (paragraphs 1.5 and 2.7).
- The purpose-built teaching clinic, with associated guidance for students and staff, facilitates student learning and postgraduate research (paragraphs 2.2.1 and 4.2).
- The reciprocal benefits derived from final year interns mentoring students in the clinic observation unit (paragraph 4.2).

Recommendations

The QAA review team recommends the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic to:

- formalise the policy and procedures for mentoring new teaching staff by the start of 2013-14 (paragraph 2.1.1)
- develop comprehensive policies and procedures for promoting the effective contribution of students to quality assurance and enhancement to be concluded by the start of 2013-14 (paragraph 2.3.1)
- develop a more systematic, comprehensive and centralised process for monitoring student data for enhancement purposes, including equality and diversity data, across all programmes by the start of 2012-13 (paragraph 2.4.2)
- develop an institutional infrastructure to maintain centralised oversight and management of quality assurance policies and procedures by the start of 2013-14 (paragraphs 1.4.2 and 2.4)
- review its own policies and procedures, including those on academic appeals, careers guidance and supporting students with disabilities, to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose as the academic portfolio expands by the start of 2013-14 (paragraphs 2.6, 2.7, 2.8.1 and 2.9.1)

- put in place a formal induction process for international students for the start of 2012-13 (paragraph 2.9)
- establish a strategic approach to the dissemination of good practice across the academic portfolio by the start of 2013-14 (paragraph 4.3).

Affirmations of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms the following actions** that the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The development of management information systems to make required statistical data more publicly available (paragraph 3.3).
- The ongoing development of e-learning to support students' learning opportunities (paragraph 2.12.1).
- The current review of the student charter to ensure that it is tailored to all groups of students and is better communicated to staff and students (paragraph 2.14.1).
- The development of an institutional learning and teaching strategy (paragraphs 2.1.2 and 4.1).

Public information

The information that the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic provides about its higher education is current, reliable, useful and accessible to students.

The first-year student experience

The Anglo-European College of Chiropractic manages the first-year student experience carefully and effectively.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the operational description and handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Institutional Review for England and Northern Ireland](#).⁴

About the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic

The Anglo-European College of Chiropractic was founded in 1965 and is the largest provider of professionally accredited chiropractic education within Europe. It is an independent, higher education, not for profit, charitable institution, with an international reputation for the highest quality education, clinical training and research in the chiropractic community. The College's mission statement in their 2012-20 Strategic Plan is 'A healthier society through education, research and clinical care'.

Until 1990 graduates were awarded a Diploma in Chiropractic by the College. The first BSc Chiropractic degree programme was validated by the Council for National Academic Awards and awarded in 1991. The awarding body from 1993-2006 was the University of Portsmouth.

The Quality Assurance Agency visited the College in May 2002 on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, to consider designation for direct funding. As the

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/ireni.aspx

College was too small to receive direct funding, it established a collaboration with Bournemouth University, becoming an Associate College in 2005.

Chiropractic education at many European institutions is based on a five-year full-time model, as this is the requirement of the respective national associations and/or the government-appointed registering bodies. To promote parity with European education, a 3+2 BSc (Hons) Human Sciences/MSc Chiropractic degree programme was developed by the AECC and validated by Bournemouth University in 2011. The College also offers post-qualification MSc programmes and a small number of full-time PhD posts have been created with students registered at a number of universities.

The College's new strategic plan for the 2012 to 2020 period contains a number of key challenges for the institution. This plan is designed to support the College in its mission to diversify its academic provision and to expand as an institution. New programmes will be introduced in order to evolve the College into a multidisciplinary healthcare education provider. In 2012-13 the College will deliver a BSc (Hons) Community Health and Rehabilitation, validated by the University of Central Lancashire, and a Human Health Sciences Access to Higher Education programme validated by the Open College Network (South West Region).

The College's student body is represented by the Student Union (SU), consisting of eight elected representatives who are also full-time students, and one full-time administrator. The SU regularly meets with staff members, and the structure and rapport the SU have built up with the institution is invaluable.

Explanation of the findings about the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic

This section explains the key findings of the review in more detail.⁵

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#)⁶ is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.⁷

1 Academic standards

Outcome

The academic standards of the awards that the College delivers on behalf of its awarding bodies **meet UK expectations** for threshold standards. The review team's reasons for this judgement are given below.

Meeting external qualifications benchmarks

1.1 The Anglo-European College of Chiropractic has established a number of successful partnerships with universities as validating and awarding bodies for its degree programmes. The College has mapped its programmes against *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), as required by the awarding body, the General Chiropractic Council and the Consortium for the Accreditation of Sonographic Education. The College has been accredited by the European Council on Chiropractic Education since 1992, and is assessed on a regular basis for compliance against the Council's published standards.

Use of external examiners

1.2 Each awarding university is responsible for the appointment of external examiners. A comprehensive database of external examiners is maintained by the College. External examiner reports are considered at Year Steering Group Meetings and at Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme Steering Group meetings, all of which include student representatives. The reports are also placed on the College's internal computer network for staff and students to read. Students were not generally aware that the reports were available in this way. External examiners meet students and may observe practical examinations.

1.2.1 External examiners' reports and the College's responses to them are considered by members of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee and Academic Board. For Bournemouth University programmes, the College's School Reader is required to compile a report detailing the issues raised by external examiners and the responses made by the College. Unit Leaders and Programme Leaders are involved in preparing the responses provided to external examiners. The School Quality Report, prepared on an annual basis and received by the Academic Board, includes any actions derived from issues raised by external examiners. Each Annual Monitoring Report submitted to Bournemouth University

⁵ The full body of evidence used to compile the report is not published. However it is available on request for inspection. Please contact QAA Reviews Group.

⁶ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary/pages/default.aspx

⁷ See note 4.

also includes a response to issues raised by the external examiner for the respective programme.

1.2.3 The pool of suitable external examiners who meet both university and professional body requirements is limited. Steps are being taken to recruit a sufficient range of appropriately qualified external examiners, including recruiting from Europe. Recent professional body reports confirm that appropriately qualified external examiners had been appointed. Induction of external examiners is the responsibility of the awarding university but the College also provides its own induction, and revised the process in November 2011.

Assessment and standards

1.3 Approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies follow the requirements and expectations of the validating partners and accrediting bodies. Assessment strategies are contained within programme specifications and details of unit assessment are contained within unit descriptors. Assessment criteria are derived from the relevant awarding body's requirements. The College also prepares detailed answer schemes for staff as appropriate. All intended learning outcomes are mapped against modes of assessment. Standardised assessment forms are used for the assessment of clinical practice.

1.3.1 In response to feedback from students, external examiners, accrediting bodies and validating partners, the College has made changes and improvements to assessment. The quality of the feedback provided to students has been commended by a number of external examiners. Students valued the opportunity for peer assessment and formative assessment. Postgraduate students were very positive about the preparation they received from lecturers prior to engaging in assessment and the timely and constructive feedback.

1.3.2 Moderation procedures are described in detail and understood by staff. Anonymous marking is in place where appropriate and all projects/dissertations are double marked. Use is made of audit tapes for clinical examinations and external examiners have access to these recordings. External examiners comment positively on the conduct of the Board of Examiners. Arrangements are in place for reporting on student progression to meet awarding body and professional body requirements.

Setting and maintaining programme standards

1.4 The Academic Board, which in turn reports to the Governing Body, is responsible for institutional oversight of academic standards. There are clearly understood reporting lines between sub-committees and parent committees to oversee the maintenance of standards. However, due to the complex nature of the committee structure and the potential for duplication of effort and/or a lack of clarity regarding decision making, opportunities for rationalisation will be considered by the College. Arrangements for managing academic provision will be subject to review to ensure effective and efficient structures are in place for diversification of the provision and to meet the needs of multiple awarding bodies.

1.4.1 Any changes to academic programmes are formally reviewed within the College committee structure prior to being submitted to the relevant partner University for approval. In addition to the requirements and expectations of validating partners, programmes are subjected to the rigorous quality standards of a number of professional bodies.

1.4.2 The College's responsibilities for managing academic standards are outlined in awarding body documentation and the College's Governance and Management Handbook. The College does not have its own quality assurance framework. To date, programmes have been awarded by one University and the College has therefore made use of that University's policies and procedures. As the College diversifies its provision and works with more

awarding organisations, it will need to accommodate several different quality assurance frameworks.

Subject benchmarks

1.5 The College makes use of a wide range of UK and European higher education and professional benchmarks for setting and maintaining academic standards, which also support clear progression routes into employment nationally and internationally, and is considered to be a feature of **good practice**.

1.5.1 Effective use is made of subject benchmark statements during the design, approval, delivery and review of programmes to inform standards. In the absence of a specific subject benchmark statement for chiropractic, the College has identified a range of seven subject benchmark statements as being relevant in part. These benchmark statements are used to inform course content, generic graduate skills and those skills required of professional groups working in a healthcare context.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

Outcome

The quality of learning opportunities at the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic **meets UK expectations**. The review team's reasons for this judgement are given below.

Professional standards for teaching and learning

2.1 Responsibility for the appointment of staff is devolved to the College by Bournemouth University, and monitored through the University's periodic institutional review and programme validation processes. Criteria for appointment of staff and others delivering the programmes are clear and transparent and include the requirement for all new staff to have a teaching qualification as well as an appropriate academic qualification. Over one-third of teaching staff are qualified to doctoral level. Around half of academic staff are also members of the Higher Education Academy. Almost all teaching staff are professionally qualified and professional practice is incorporated into teaching activity and into the curriculum.

2.1.1 Experienced staff mentor new staff, but there is no formal training or guidance for mentors, apart from an induction checklist. The review team **recommends** that the policy and procedures for mentoring new teaching staff is formalised.

2.1.2 Students cited examples of research-led teaching and opportunities to contribute to research undertaken by staff, which they found inspiring. However, students felt that there are limited opportunities to research, analyse and critique alternative approaches to the discipline. Students were concerned that this did not always foster an environment of robust academic debate and might affect their preparedness for practice. In response, students have initiated a club at which external speakers with a wider range of viewpoints give presentations and debate takes place. The review team **affirms** the action being taken to develop an institutional learning and teaching strategy.

Learning resources

2.2 The College is developing an e-learning strategy to support the delivery of the programmes both on and off-site. A learning technologist has been appointed to promote e-learning within the College and to provide appropriate staff development.

2.2.1 There are competing demands on space, and the College needs to balance the tensions between the requirements for offices, teaching accommodation and student study space, and be alert to the need to include students in discussions about learning and study spaces. Staff and students are very well supported by both the physical and e-library facilities and by the expertise provided by the librarian. The purpose-built teaching clinic, with associated guidance for students and staff, facilitates student learning and postgraduate research and is a feature of **good practice**.

2.2.2 Staff development needs are identified through appraisals, through institutional planning processes, and through feedback from students. Staff are encouraged to undertake further qualifications and have the opportunity to take part in staff development activities at Bournemouth University. There are also specific staff development workshops and days run by the College. Staff development activities are reported to the research and staff development committee.

Student voice

2.3 Students are represented on the main academic committees at programme and institutional level. Students from each year of the programme are represented on programme committees. At institutional level, there is only one student representative, who is a Student Union officer. Students provided a number of examples where they did not feel properly consulted or made aware of plans at a sufficiently early stage, especially where decisions were made by senior staff outside of the academic committee structure. However, there is evidence that the College responds to student feedback. For example, the generic student handbook has been enhanced and made more interactive. A new practical examination feedback form has also been introduced in response to students' requests to receive more feedback on specific areas of practice.

2.3.1 The College does not currently provide training or support for student representatives to help them engage fully with the quality assurance processes. However, training is provided by outgoing representatives and through the National Union of Students. The review team **recommends** that the College develop comprehensive policies and procedures for promoting the effective contribution of students to quality assurance and enhancement.

Management information used to improve quality and standards

2.4 There is no single person or team responsible for developing or maintaining oversight of quality assurance processes within the College. The School Reader maintains oversight of annual monitoring reports on behalf of Bournemouth University, and acts as an informal quality assurance adviser. The review team **recommends** that an institutional infrastructure to maintain centralised oversight and management of quality assurance policies and procedures is developed.

2.4.1 In preparation for the review, the College developed a centralised document management system, known as the Q drive, which acts as a source of information and a document repository for all academic and administrative staff. There are systems in place to collect management information, but reliance is placed on the awarding body to collect and disseminate student data. A new database managed by Bournemouth University will allow the College to access and analyse data related to its students.

2.4.2 The College provided evidence of analysing statistical information for enhancement purposes, for example in relation to staff succession planning and the usefulness of the website. However, statistical information sometimes appears to be considered in isolation without always ensuring that there are processes in place to analyse underlying causes of

trends or issues revealed by the data. Key performance indicators in the College's 2007-11 Strategic Review were not systematically monitored or evaluated. The review team **recommends** that a more systematic, comprehensive and centralised process for monitoring student data for enhancement purposes, including equality and diversity data, is developed across all programmes.

2.4.3 While progress on action plans is monitored, there is no systematic process to evaluate the effectiveness of actions. The action plans themselves do not indicate how the College would measure outcomes. The College has historically collected and analysed data on a programme-by-programme basis, but intends to develop a new institution-wide approach for 2012-13 to analyse information across programmes and awarding bodies. The College also intends to publish data equivalent to that found on Unistats on its own website, in accordance with new national requirements for published information.

Admission to the College

2.5 The College has responsibility for the admission of students. The College has a clear admissions process, which is informed by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions programme. However, there is variability in practice as to whether students are interviewed. Prospective students from the UK and Norway are interviewed while other overseas students may be admitted on the basis of an application and recommendation from their local chiropractic association. It is not clear how equity and fairness is achieved for all applicants. The College's Admissions policy is in line with the awarding university's procedures for accreditation of prior certified or experiential learning. Appeals on admissions decisions will be handled in accordance with the respective awarding university's policies. It is not clear whether there will be a second stage appeal process to the Open College Network for those applying to the Access programme.

Complaints and appeals

2.6 Students had raised some concerns that there was a lack of clarity regarding the appeals process but the process has now been reviewed. Previously appeals were dealt with solely by the College, but under the new procedure the College deals with the first stage of the appeals process (which it bases on the regulations of one of their partner universities) and second stage appeal is to the partner university. It is envisaged that a similar process will be followed with new partners. The number and outcomes of appeals are reported to Programme Steering Groups and the Academic Standards and Quality Committee.

Career advice and guidance

2.7 The College's use of a wide range of UK and European academic and professional benchmarks, and accreditation from UK and European chiropractic professional and regulatory bodies, supports students' progression into employment both nationally and internationally. A final year module is planned in the new chiropractic curriculum to help students to develop business skills in order to manage their own practice.

2.7.1 However, the College's approach to careers information, advice and guidance appears limited to the practice of chiropractic. As the academic portfolio is diversified, there will be a need to offer a broader range of guidance. The College does not have a careers adviser, although students have access to the careers department at the relevant awarding university. For students admitted to the Access programme, there is limited careers guidance provision in place.

Supporting disabled students

2.8 Information about students with disabilities is collected during the admissions process. The College currently relies on Bournemouth University to collate and record the data, but a new system is in development which will allow the College to access and use the data for its own monitoring and enhancement purposes.

2.8.1 The student induction pack provides general information on student support but does not specifically refer to support for students with disabilities. An Additional Learning Needs Tutor at Bournemouth University provides support for student learning needs. While relevant information and facilities are accessible and sign-posted, there is limited systematic management of this support to ensure that all disabled students are aware of and make use of resources available.

2.8.2 The team **recommends** that the College should review its own policies and procedures, including those on academic appeals, careers guidance and supporting students with disabilities, to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose as the academic portfolio expands.

Supporting international students

2.9 Around half of the students at the College are from outside the UK. There is no specific policy or cross-college practice for the admission and induction of international students. However, the College is trialling the 'Prepare for Success' course to help international students to understand higher level study skills and academic life in the UK. The College is **recommended** to put in place a formal induction process for international students.

2.9.1 The curriculum promotes early integration between UK and overseas students through group work in the first few weeks of study, which mixes students of different nationalities. English language tuition is provided for students who need it, but this need is not systematically identified at induction.

Supporting postgraduate research students

2.10 The College supports a small number of doctoral students, who are registered with a number of different universities. The College provides supervision, and meets the expectations placed on it by the awarding universities. The College does not systematically monitor progression and achievement across all doctoral studies, although this is being planned.

2.10.1 Doctoral students supervise chiropractic students in the teaching clinic, but do not have any teaching responsibilities. Student representation at this level is largely informal. There are currently no postgraduate students on cross-college committees.

Learning delivered through collaborative arrangements

2.11 The College currently has no provision delivered through collaborative arrangements.

Flexible, distributed and e-learning

2.12 The College has recently employed a learning technologist to assist in implementing its e-learning strategy. It has also established a blended learning special interest group to further develop e-learning and distance learning. Students have access to Bournemouth University's virtual learning environment, but the College has also recently

developed its own, which offers innovative learning support in addition to a range of information.

2.12.1 There is a considerable amount of work in progress to fulfil the College's strategic plan. The review team **affirms** the ongoing development of e-learning to support students' learning opportunities.

Work-based and placement learning

2.13 All students spend a year in the on-site teaching clinic as part of their programme. Students on MSc Applied Professional Practice programmes are in work, and reflect on their practical experience as part of the programme.

2.13.1 Detailed information about placement learning is set out in programme handbooks, including responsibilities and entitlements of staff and students. A Placement Concerns Protocol allows students to raise concerns about individual placements. Students have structured opportunities to provide feedback on distance learning placements through group and one-to-one discussions with their tutors. Supervision is managed effectively, in accordance with the awarding university's regulations.

Student charter

2.14 The Student Charter clearly sets out the rights and responsibilities of all students at the College, and is easily accessible through the Generic Student Handbook. Currently, it is not tailored to specific groups of students, although the College is considering a version to cover both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Charter provides guidance on a range of student services and procedures, although where to find more detailed information is not clearly sign-posted. Student feedback on the charter was mixed. Undergraduate students were mostly aware of it and found it satisfactory, but postgraduate students were largely unaware of it.

2.14.1 The Charter is reviewed biannually, led by the Academic Registrar, with input from student representatives. The review team **affirms** the current review of the Student Charter to ensure that it is tailored to all groups of students and is better communicated to staff and students.

3 Public information

Outcome

The Anglo-European College of Chiropractic **makes information about academic standards and quality publicly available** via its website. The information is clear, accessible, accurate, and up to date. Students find the information useful both in helping them make an informed choice when applying to the College and in preparing for what they might expect when they join. The review team's reasons for this conclusion are given below.

Findings

3.1 The website has recently been improved in response to feedback from students and other users, and contains more detailed programme information. A new marketing manager has been appointed and is putting in place processes for checking and signing off published information. There are clear lines of accountability, with the Principal holding ultimate responsibility for approval of published material.

3.2 The College is working on systems and processes to enable them to meet national expectations for the publication of information from 2012-13. Bournemouth University's database will allow the College greater ease of access to relevant data for those programmes, but a comprehensive system will need to be developed for all programmes and all awarding organisations.

3.3 Unistats data about the College's chiropractic programmes is available through Bournemouth University but it is not clearly identifiable. The review team **affirms** the College's plans to make this information more readily available on its own website.

3.4 Students had raised concerns about the lack of transparency regarding the cost of specialist materials they needed to purchase for their course. The College is encouraged to make clear the approximate costs for additional expenses in its publicity material.

4 Enhancement of learning opportunities

Outcome

The enhancement of learning opportunities at the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic **meets UK expectations**. The team's reasons for this judgement are given below.

Findings

4.1 Enhancement of student learning opportunities is embedded in the College's strategic plan, and the team **affirms** the development of an 'enhancement of learning and teaching strategy', which will support the overall strategic plan. The committee structure is being reviewed, which provides an opportunity to further consider how enhancement initiatives are integrated in a systematic and planned manner at institutional level. A Student Union representative, the Academic Liaison Officer, sits on each of the cross-college committees. The College should consider how students across all programmes and levels of study may be more fully represented at the institutional level.

4.2 The enhancement of student learning opportunities is embedded in the College's approach to teaching and learning. For example, the team noted a feature of **good practice** in the purpose-built teaching clinic, with associated guidance for the students and staff, which facilitates student learning and postgraduate research. The team also noted a feature of **good practice** in the reciprocal benefits derived from final year interns mentoring students in the clinic observation unit.

4.3 At the programme level, good practice is identified systematically through annual monitoring and is shared through the committee structure. At the institutional level, there are strong informal methods of disseminating good practice, through the close working relationships between all staff and students. The School Reader reviews annual monitoring reports to ensure that they reflect adequately on the data provided, and that they identify good practice and the issues and actions which need to be addressed at the programme and institutional level. As the College expands its academic portfolio and collaborates with other awarding bodies, the team **recommends** that a strategic approach to the dissemination of good practice across the academic portfolio is established.

5 Theme: First Year Student Experience

Each academic year a specific theme relating to higher education provision in England and Northern Ireland is chosen for especial attention by QAA's Institutional Review teams. In 2011-12 the theme is the **First Year Student Experience**.

The review team found that the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic manages the first-year student experience carefully and effectively.

Supporting students' transition

5.1 A comprehensive induction pack includes information about the library, the virtual learning environment and academic and personal support. An Additional Learning Needs Tutor from Bournemouth University attends induction to discuss available support. Students felt overloaded with information at induction. The College recently conducted a survey on the induction process, and plans to make improvements for the forthcoming year.

5.1.1 The curriculum also supports students' transition. Units such as Transferable Skills, the Think Tank project and the Ongoing Case all give students early feedback on their progress. First-year students have a minimum of three tutorials to discuss their Personal Development Portfolio and to reflect on their transition. Students also carry out formative peer marking, which helps them to identify appropriate levels of work and academic conduct. Students were positive about the accessibility and responsiveness of tutors, the support from the library and the provision of learning resources.

5.1.2 The Student Union provides many activities in addition to social events to support students' transition. For example, the Student Union acts as an intermediary with landlords and has set up a system of 'guardians', where students from higher years offer support to new students. Students also form their own study groups to support each other.

Information for first-year students

5.2 Open days offer comprehensive information about the curriculum, clinical facilities and employment prospects. The additional cost for specialist equipment was not clear in publicity information, and Unistats information is not clearly identifiable as it is listed under the awarding university. However, this information will be included in the College's Key Information Set to be available from 2012-13.

5.2.1 Detailed programme information is contained in the generic student handbook and on the virtual learning environments. Student facilities, including learning support and careers information, are available at Bournemouth University, although they are not widely taken up by College students. BSc Exercise Science students are entirely based at Bournemouth University in their first year and do not feel part of the College community until their second year.

Assessment and feedback

5.3 Students confirmed that information about assessment was clear and accessible, and that appropriate guidance is given on completing assignments. Information about academic conduct is provided in the Generic Student Handbook, and this is reinforced through peer-marking activities in the first term. Although the National Student Survey results showed relatively low scores on satisfaction with feedback on assessments, students confirmed that feedback had been enhanced through a new form, which would give detailed feedback on clinical performance as well as written work.

Monitoring retention and progression

5.4 There are a number of mechanisms for monitoring the progress of first-year students. All students are allocated a personal tutor. Tutors offer an open door policy and respond quickly to emails. Staff attend workshops at Bournemouth University to develop their personal tutoring skills. Student Progress Groups are held termly, following an assessment period. Staff and students emphasised the collegiate atmosphere of the College which provides good peer-to-peer and staff-to-student support. The Personal Development Portfolio is integrated into the new BSc/MSc Chiropractic curriculum. This provides structured opportunities for students to meet with their personal tutors and reflect on their progress.

5.4.1 Students who fail a third or more units are put on Academic Probation and meet with the Director of Undergraduate Programmes and the Year Tutor. Meetings are recorded and strategies for improvement identified. BSc Exercise Science students who are identified as being at risk agree a learning contract which is monitored. Exit surveys are conducted when students leave and retention issues are analysed.

5.4.2 Progression rates at the College are high. The annual monitoring process is used effectively to monitor progression, and Boards of Examiners also consider progression data. The College demonstrated that it was able to respond effectively when progression issues were identified.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to key terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Most terms also have formal 'operational' definitions. For example, pages 18-19 of the handbook for this review method give formal definitions of: threshold academic standards; learning opportunities; enhancement; and public information.

The handbook can be found on the QAA website at:

www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/ireni-handbook.aspx.

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality:

www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/pages/default.aspx.

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary/pages/default.aspx.

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

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.

credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

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

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.

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

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is being developed from 2011 to replace the **Academic Infrastructure** and will incorporate all its key elements, along with additional topics and overarching themes.

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.

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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
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

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