London College of Advanced Management

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

December 2012

Key findings about London College of Advanced Management

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in December 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 Chartered Management Institute and Edexcel.

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 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 accessible and caring approach to student support (paragraphs 2.12-2.15).

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:

- clarify the role of the Quality Committee, in relation to the management of academic standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.5)
- ensure assessment feedback is explicitly referenced to the relevant unit outcomes and addresses academic writing skills (paragraph 2.3).

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

- review the current performance management processes (paragraphs 2.16-2.18)
- update the website to ensure it reflects the location and facilities available within the College more precisely (paragraph 3.4).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at London College of Advanced Management (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 Chartered Management Institute and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Professor Christopher Gale, Mr Steve Harris, Ms Barbara Thomas (reviewers) and Mr Bob Saynor (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 College and its awarding organisations, meetings with staff and students.

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

- subject benchmark statements
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*)
- the awarding body and organisation requirements
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)
- relevant National Occupational Standards.

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

London College of Advanced Management (the College) was incorporated in the UK as a private limited company in 2009. The original company was established as a business start-up operation. After a period of no trading and limited recruitment, the company was transferred to the current management in March 2012. The College is located in premises in Chadwell Heath, near Romford.

The College mission statement includes reference to providing excellent quality education in a safe and supportive environment. It also states that the College strives to bridge the gap between the theoretical and the practical by providing strong and relevant links to the current economic and jobs climate. The College has 74 higher level students. All students are studying on a full-time basis.

At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation, with numbers of students in brackets:

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
- Level 6 Diploma in Management and Leadership (25)

Edexcel
- Level 7 BTEC Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (14)
- Level 5 BTEC Diploma in Management and Leadership (35)

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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.

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College currently works with Edexcel, and CMI. The awarding organisations provide the programme specifications and intended learning outcomes. The College is responsible for learning, teaching and assessment, learning resources, student support, staff development and public information for all awards.

Recent developments

The College is in the first year of delivering CMI and Edexcel programmes. To support these developments, the College has introduced changes to programme delivery and organisational structures to support higher education operations. Staff within the College have multiple roles and operate principally through the Quality Committee. The College has aspirational plans for growth from 2013 onwards. This includes offering additional awards and increasing student numbers.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A student submission was not submitted to the team in advance; however, a summary of student feedback was included in the College self-evaluation document. The summary provided an overview of students' views in relation to the quality and enhancement of the programmes they are studying and how well they are progressing at the College. The questionnaire also gave the students a chance to voice any concerns about areas they feel required improvements. The coordinator met students at the preparatory meeting. Evidence of student feedback through institutional, programme and module feedback was available during the visit. This evidence, together with the team's meeting with the students during the review visit, was helpful to the team.

Detailed findings about London College of Advanced Management

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The Principal has overarching responsibility for academic standards in the College and is the lead contact with the awarding body and organisation for all academic and quality affairs. The Academic Director is the senior member of staff responsible for the operational management of the course advisers and the teaching staff delivering the prescribed awards on behalf of the awarding organisations. Due to the size of the core team, there is some crossover in responsibilities within the senior College team. For example, the Admissions Officer and Head Administrator both undertake a course advisory role.
The Academic Director also acts as Course Director, and has overarching responsibility for monitoring programme delivery, quality assurance and support to teaching staff.

1.2   The academic staff have responsibility for setting assessments in line with awarding organisation requirements and in line with the College's internal verification and assessment policies. The assessment guidance from CMI requires assignments to be practical and work-related, and designed in line with the Institute's Centre Code of Practice. The evidence provided and feedback from staff and students confirmed that the assignments include a range of opportunities to set the work within the context of the business environment. The College's assessment plans for CMI are agreed with an approved external verifier, and implementation is in line with the awarding organisation requirements.

1.3   A Quality Committee has been formed in line with the College's Quality Assurance Policy. This committee meets monthly as prescribed by the College quality calendar and is chaired by the Academic Director. The Quality Committee is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the College's provision. The Committee's responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities is implicit in the Quality Assurance Policy; however, this is not explicitly stated within the terms of reference for this key group.

1.4   The College has developed a number of policies and procedures for use by the management team and all staff. The Quality Committee minutes indicate that new policies have begun to improve previous practice, for example with the addition of a student voice on the Committee. The policies and procedures that impact upon the management of academic standards are evidenced in the College's Quality Assurance Policy. As these have been newly introduced, it is too early for the team to evaluate their effectiveness, as they have yet to complete a full academic cycle.

1.5   The Quality Committee has a responsibility for shaping the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the monitoring of teaching quality. The College has recently appointed a student representative to sit on this committee. Students clearly understand the role of the student representative and spoke positively about the opportunities to use this role as a conduit to present issues to the College. The minutes from the Quality Committee do not have a specific agenda item for teaching and learning. However, minutes from the most recent meetings reflect on discussions held relating to some teaching and learning matters. These include assessment, internal verification, future plans for peer review of teaching and the implementation of monthly student feedback forms. However, it is not clear from the supporting evidence or terms of reference the central role this committee has in the leadership and management of academic standards and the enhancement of learning

opportunities. Therefore, the team considers it advisable that the College clarifies the role of the Quality Committee, in relation to the management of academic standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities.

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

1.6   The use of external reference points by the College is exercised through the implementation of the *Code of practice*, alignment of programmes to FHEQ and subject benchmark statements. These are reflected in programme design, module definitions and programme specifications. Edexcel provision is benchmarked against the QCF for each award. CMI provision is also benchmarked against the National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) recognises the programmes of study that the College delivers on behalf of its awarding organisations as operating within the QCF.

1.7   Staff maintain active engagement within their occupational practice, and, in addition, some gain credit through continual engagement with their professional body. This, in turn, augments external reference points for the College.

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

1.8   At the time of the visit, the College was part way through its first cycle of delivering the awards. The College has in place a number of internal policies and procedures in order to be compliant with the awarding organisations' moderation, verification and examining requirements. External examiners are appointed by the awarding organisations. For all programmes, the College is responsible for setting assessments, marking and second marking, moderation, providing feedback to students, preparing and responding to annual monitoring reviews, including external examiner reports and the student appeal system. The Quality Committee operates in accordance with the quality calendar in considering these items.

1.9   Current procedures require all reports from external examiners to be received by the Principal, who will share their content with the Quality Committee. The College confirmed that responses will be agreed by the Quality Committee and sent to the awarding organisations, on behalf of the College, by the Principal. Any actions necessary will be authorised by and reported back to the Quality Committee. External reports will also be shared with students in accordance with the *Code of practice*, *Section 4: External examining*.

> 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 organisation.

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The responsibilities and arrangements for managing and reporting on the quality of learning opportunities are those described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5. These arrangements are effective in managing and supporting the quality of learning opportunities in the College's higher education provision, and are understood within the College by staff and students.

2.2   Academic staff are responsible for the delivery of the Edexcel units, which are inclusive of comprehensive tutor guides, outline learning plans and guidance on assessment to meet the unit assessment criteria. CMI offers College staff group membership of the Institute, which enables access to support and information for students. This includes access to learning materials, toolkits and support for group and blended learning approaches. Students registered on CMI awards also have access to these online resources and confirmed to the review team that this is useful.

2.3   The Academic Director has oversight of the assessment process and its implementation. No recent reports are available from the awarding organisations to verify the current assessment process. The review team was provided with examples of assessed work for Edexcel level 5 and CMI level 6 units. Level 7 work was not yet available. Student assessment feedback is completed using a standard assessment feedback form. Some inconsistencies were found in the quantity and quality of the feedback. While some developmental feedback is provided to students, no specific alignment of feedback to the unit learning outcomes was evident. Teaching staff develop tasks which test the students' writing skills; however, assessment feedback does not specifically address the use of poor grammar or identify deficiencies in language skills. It is advisable that the College ensures assessment feedback is explicitly referenced to the relevant unit outcomes and addresses academic writing skills.

2.4   The responsibilities checklist identifies the core aspects of the College's responsibilities for both Edexcel and CMI. The team confirms that the College has appropriate procedures in place to enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

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

2.5   The College engages with external reference points, as stated in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.7, to manage and enhance learning opportunities for students.

2.6   The College's main external reference points are those prescribed by its awarding organisations through their programme specifications and intended learning outcomes. The College has developed a number of policies relating to aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, including policies for internal verification, assessment, student interaction and complaints and an appeals procedure. The Academic Infrastructure does not feature strongly in the College's current provision; however, there are some explicit references to it and the many new policies contain the essence of the *Code of practice* precepts and practices.

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

2.7   The Academic Director meets informally with teaching staff and these meetings are used as fora for information and issues of concern for staff. Notes from these meetings were made available to reviewers. Matters relating to the quality of teaching and learning that arise from these meetings are taken to the Quality Committee or are dealt with on a more immediate basis by the Academic Director, thus demonstrating an approach to student enhancement in practice.

2.8   Teaching methodologies include lectures, interactive approaches, group work and face-to-face tutorials. Workshops provide the main opportunity for students to review their own work. These correspond to the approach outlined for awards offered through the CMI. Students reported that they fully understand and are satisfied with the teaching, learning and

assessment methods used. Scheduled tutorials with staff are built into student timetables on a weekly basis. The Student Interaction Policy outlines the different approaches to gathering feedback. This includes bimonthly questionnaires, an appointed student representative on the Quality Committee, a complaints box situated in the main reception area, and face-to-face meetings.

2.9 While there is no formal personal tutoring policy in place, the students confirmed that they have regular meetings with the academic staff and that they are able to discuss concerns with any member of staff or the student representative. Students spoke positively about the staff, describing them as supportive and helpful on all aspects of their studies. Contact is made through a variety of communication channels, including email, telephone and text to ensure relevant information is communicated effectively. Student personal files, which comply with external regulatory body requirements, were available. At the time of the visit, there was some evidence of ongoing progress tracking to demonstrate academic progress. This was mainly through the development of tracking spreadsheets for both awarding organisations, which showed student progression in each unit and at each level.

2.10 The College implements an assessment and internal verification process and evidence of assessment of work and feedback was available to the review team. Students confirmed that they receive formative feedback prior to summative assessment and that they are able to appeal the assessment grade at this stage within the Policy for Complaints and Appeals. Staff and students confirmed their understanding that appeals on academic grounds are not allowed following summative assessment and the internal verification process. The team confirms that the College meets the required standards.

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

2.11 The College has a Recruitment Policy for students and an admissions and induction procedure. This clearly outlines the process to students from initial enquiry through to application, interview and admission into the College. Students confirmed that the College response to their initial contact had been instrumental in both their decision to apply and decision to choose the College. The Admissions Officer is responsible for the recruitment and selection of students. This includes using internet telephony interviews with prospective students to ensure that the requirements of appropriate documentation, informed selection of courses and English language skills are met. The College overseas agency agreement outlines responsibilities for student recruitment. The College course advisers are the main agent contact and they provide information to students about courses and progression opportunities.

2.12 Student induction to the relevant award is highlighted within handbooks and includes generic information about the College, the level of qualification, relevant professional and occupational standards and Accreditation of Prior Learning. The Student Co-ordinator is responsible for pastoral issues with students studying at the College. The students confirmed that the information available before admission was helpful and that the induction included information about academic misconduct and the need to attribute references to written work.

2.13 Students are allocated to timetabled groups for tutorials, seminars and workshops during their induction week. A minimum attendance requirement is laid out in the student handbook and all students attend on a full-time basis. Information for students relating to their studies and support arrangements are displayed on the College noticeboard in the main reception area. Students engage in some social activities which are jointly arranged between staff and students. The students were positive about their overall experience and would recommend the College to others.

2.14   The College provides a quarterly careers advice session with relevant professionals. Careers advice is managed through academic staff, who share their own professional experiences as part of curriculum delivery. The College selects optional units to support future careers and student employment opportunities within a global context. Future plans include inviting guest speakers and arranging relevant field trips. Student feedback indicates that the careers advice at the College is informative and that the practical units are relevant to student ambitions.

2.15   The College provided the review team with a summary of student views based on contribution through questionnaires. Students confirmed that they had been offered the opportunity to contribute to the preparations for the review visit and had access to this section of the self-evaluation documentation. The College operates an open-door policy and students are encouraged to approach any member of staff to discuss and consider personal or academic concerns. This is much appreciated and valued by students. The range of support provided by the College reflects a student-centred approach throughout the organisation. This includes the open-planned layout and configuration of the facilities to ensure staff are accessible and can deal with student concerns immediately. Students clearly appreciate this accessible and caring approach and the review team identifies this as good practice.

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

2.16   Individual staff curriculum vitae indicate evidence of appropriate subject-related qualifications and experience of teaching within the private sector and overseas. The employee handbook includes a section on the purpose of performance management and a training policy; however, no teaching staff have teaching qualifications or demonstrable experience of staff development in higher education teaching and learning. Staff with professional body qualifications undertake continuing professional development under the auspices of the relevant professional body.

2.17   The College has no formal peer review of teaching, learning and assessment. However, students complete teacher assessment forms for each unit, which are used by the Academic Director. These inform individual staff performance management reviews. All new staff who are interviewed for teaching posts are observed in a lesson prior to successful appointment. The College uses the awarding organisation recommendations of subject knowledge and presentation skills as the main basis for the appointment of staff. There is an induction form for the recording of the induction process for all new staff to the College. The review team had the opportunity during the review visit to verify these procedures and support available to new staff, by meeting with staff who will start employment at the College in January 2013.

2.18   Training is carried out in the form of seminars conducted by the awarding organisations and some in-house training events provided by a business consultant. The College has organised a specific training event around presentation and communication skills for teaching staff in the current academic calendar. However, most staff development is organised on an informal basis and there is no systematic identification or planning of staff training in teaching, learning and assessment to enhance the student learning experience. The team recommends that it would be desirable that the College reviews the current performance management processes.

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

2.19   The College occupies the greater part of the top floor in a fully serviced building. There is a separate administration section, offices, meeting room, computer laboratory, library, student kitchen and common room, staffroom and four classrooms. The students confirmed that the library has sufficient stock of learning materials to meet the requirements of their studies and that the facilities are satisfactory. Human resources comprise six core staff and two additional part-time teaching staff. Access is also available to online course material from the awarding organisations and the College provides free internet access. Students have open access to the College facilities during opening hours.

2.20   Electronic resources consist of learning aids available to be used in classrooms, photocopier and printing facilities. The resources are adequate to support current levels of activity. There is no separate virtual learning environment at present. The College has developed a fully costed business plan, which includes the provision of enhanced information technology and student support facilities from 2013.

> 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   As part of the awarding organisations' agreements, the College has responsibility for the publication of programme and unit information. This is made available to students via the website, prospectus, student handbooks and noticeboards. The College also publicises its policies, procedures and regulations to staff and students through notices, memoranda, employee and student handbooks, the prospectus and the website. The accuracy and reliability of this information is consistent with the awarding organisations' requirements.

3.2   The College prospectus, individual course information and website describe the awards offered and the educational environment. Overall costs to study at the College are clearly articulated to students before acceptance of a place on the course. The website is clear and easy to navigate and contains relevant and appropriate information for current and prospective students. The information available includes student entry requirements, online application, admissions, attendance, and complaints policies, Code of Conduct, prospectus and individual course information. Students confirmed that this was the main vehicle for finding out about the College, and many chose the College through obtaining information through the website or through personal recommendation. The College has in place appropriate methods to ensure that the information provided for students and stakeholders reflects the higher education provision available.

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

3.3   The Principal has overall editorial control of public information for the College. The content is initially checked and updated by the Academic Director and other members of the Quality Committee. The prospectus is changed and updated when required and is subject to a yearly review by the Quality Committee before being given final approval by the Principal. Therefore, the overall responsibility for ensuring public information is accurate, up to date and complete lies with the Principal, who liaises with the web designer or printer to confirm final proofs. These procedures also apply to all internal publications. The team confirms that these arrangements are effective in maintaining the accuracy and reliability of public information.

3.4   New staff and students are provided with hard copies of the prospectus and relevant handbooks. The College is moving towards utilising the online facilities more to promote the provision and services offered. Some policies and procedures are available in hard copy on the noticeboard for staff and students, and these are available in hard copy to individuals on request. Agents and potential students from overseas can download the prospectus and other relevant information from the website. The website is user-friendly, clear, and accessible. Both the website and prospectus give key information to current and prospective students. Some of the descriptions used on the website could be misinterpreted in relation to the location of the College and facilities. It is desirable for the College to update the website to ensure it reflects the location and facilities available within the College more precisely.

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]

London College of Advanced Management action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight December 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following area of **good practice** that is worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the accessible and caring approach to student support (paragraphs 2.12-2.15).	Monitor student questionnaires Maintain open door policy Ensure students are aware of all staff roles and the different types of support available to them Ensure student representative has adequate support by holding regular meetings with them and by providing training where needed		All staff	Continued student satisfaction Good feedback from student representative	Principal	Monthly monitoring of questionnaires and through student representative updates in Quality meetings To be evidenced via Quality meeting minutes

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[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 organisation.

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:						
• clarify the role of the Quality Committee, in relation to the management of academic standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.5)	Management of academic standards and enhancement of learning opportunities to be discussed specifically Teaching and Learning to be discussed specifically These items to be put on to the meeting agenda The Quality Assurance Policy is to be updated to clarify the exact role of the Quality Committee in relation to the Management of academic standards and Enhancement of learning opportunities	To be implemented after the March Quality meeting	Academic Director	Change in the meeting structure; these items will be discussed more specifically and in every meeting Changes in everyday practices The role of the Quality Committee will be clearly defined in the Quality Assurance Policy	Principal	Minutes to be evaluated every quarter and compared to working practices to measure success of implementation
• ensure assessment feedback is explicitly referenced to the relevant unit	All assessments to be drafted with learning outcomes in mind	April 2013 (when the next set of assignments	Academic Director	Feedback to be referenced to the particular learning	Principal	Internal verification process and external verification process

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
outcomes and addresses academic writing skills (paragraph 2.3).	Make writing skills a part of the assessment criteria	are to be distributed)		outcomes Improvement in students' writing skills		
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• review the current performance management processes (paragraphs 2.16-2.18).	Put in place an improved staff development strategy by holding regular meetings to discuss any training needs and to observe teaching staff via a peer review process to monitor performance The peer review process is to take a standard format for which all staff will be internally trained and a review form will be produced to keep all reviews consistent Any needs or issues identified will be noted down and further discussed in	Dec 2013	Academic Director	Improvement in monitoring staff performance and the effective identification and filling of skills gaps	Principal	Will evaluate effectiveness of changes by December 2013 by checking staff observation reviews, student questionnaires and what training needs have been identified/addressed via Quality meeting minutes

	minuted Quality meetings Performance will also be judged by feedback from students who will fill monthly questionnaires regarding their teacher's performance To explore the possibility of teaching staff being able to gain formal teaching qualifications or offer assistance for staff wishing to take part in Scholarly activity Update staff handbook to reflect changes					
• update the website to ensure it reflects the location and facilities available within the College more precisely (paragraph 3.4).	Update the website so all relevant information on our provision and services is available To ensure all relevant policies are available to view or download and to	March 2013	Administrator and Admissions Officer	Less generic look to the website Staff will have proper College email addresses All relevant information will be available to	Principal	Website and all published information to be checked regularly for inaccuracies and to be discussed and reviewed in the Quality Meetings This will be checked

	replace any generic information or images which could be construed as possibly misleading Web designer to make the staff email addresses operational			download and any misleading or outdated material will have been removed		via scrutiny of the Quality meeting minutes

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: *The*

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

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.