



Nelson College London

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

December 2012

Key findings about Nelson College London

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 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 this awarding organisation.

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**:

- weekly audit and tracking of lesson plans for online distribution (paragraph 2.6)
- comprehensive support for new tutors (paragraph 2.7)
- prompt and effective responses to student comments (paragraph 2.9)
- wide-ranging staff development support for tutors (paragraph 2.10)
- effective communication to students (paragraph 3.2).

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:

- standardise and fully implement the internal verification process (paragraph 1.10).

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

- review the effectiveness of the committee structure (paragraph 1.4)
- develop further the evaluation and use of management information data (paragraph 2.3)
- address the disparity of library learning resources (paragraph 2.12)
- implement a system for monitoring public information (paragraph 3.8).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Nelson College London (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 Edexcel. The review was carried out by Dr Peter Green, Mrs Patricia Millner (reviewers) and Mr Maldwyn Buckland (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 was provided in both printed and electronic format and included the self-evaluation and addendum, the student written submission, memoranda of agreements, the responsibilities checklist, external examiner reports, annual monitoring reports, the Quality Assurance Manual, assessed student work, committee meeting minutes and scrutiny of the virtual learning environment.

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

- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*)
- National Qualifications Framework
- subject benchmark statements.

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

Nelson College London (the College) was founded in 2009 and currently offers programmes at levels 4 and 5. Originally, it offered a wide range of provision up to level 7 until its change of focus, in September 2010, to the delivery of Edexcel Higher National Diploma programmes in Business and Hospitality Management. The College's mission statement confirms that the College is committed to widening participation and the further development of higher education provision, which seeks to give students the best possible learning experience. The College wishes to establish its position as a medium-sized independent business college.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation, with full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets:

Edexcel

- Higher National Diploma in Business (Ilford Campus, 200)
- Higher National Diploma in Business (Wembley Campus, 92)
- Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management (Wembley Campus, 39)

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 has complete responsibility for the management of the quality of the awards it delivers on behalf of Edexcel, including the first marking and moderation of assignments, feedback to students and annual monitoring. Programme specifications are prepared according to Edexcel's requirements.

Recent developments

The College is a small independent higher education provider in London, registered in England and Wales. Major changes in 2010 included a number of new shareholders joining the College, along with the appointment of new senior managers. In 2012, the College appointed a new Acting Principal (formally the Head of Quality).

Recently, the College opened a new campus in Wembley in the north-west of London. This new campus is small but well equipped and, along with the Ilford Campus, is controlled under a common management structure.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Student representatives submitted a number of individual questionnaires, which commented on a range of issues across the three core review themes relating to teaching and learning. Students actively participated in the preparatory meeting. During the review visit, the team met a varied range of students from both the Wembley and Ilford campuses, and discussed the written submission and a number of wider academic and pastoral issues.

Detailed findings about Nelson College London

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has a clear organisational structure, which supports academic management, administration, marketing, course planning and delivery and assessment. The Acting Principal is responsible for the academic and administrative functions of the College and reports to the Director. Currently, the Acting Principal is also operating as the Head of Quality Assurance. The College is actively seeking to appoint a Principal.

1.2 The College has recently introduced a Senior Management Committee chaired by the Director to which the Academic Committee reports. The Senior Management Committee focuses on overseeing the running of strategic operations and setting the business direction of the College, drawing its membership from the senior management team.

1.3 The Academic Committee, which meets three times per year, has authority over all academic matters and is chaired by the Head of Academic Services. It receives documentation including minutes from the Internal Verification Committee and the Assessment Board. There is a balanced division of reporting lines for senior management staff. All senior academic appointments, including the Principal, the Head of Academic Services and the Head of Quality and programme managers, are full-time appointments. It is noted that the teaching staff are part-time.

1.4 The Internal Verification Committee chaired by the Quality Assurance Manager also acts as a committee of receipt from the assessment boards and the Student Representative Committee, as well as scrutinising the programme monitoring report. Terms of reference for the Internal Verification Committee confirm a wide and discursive range of responsibilities. The terms of reference for the Academic Board and those of the Internal Verification Committee do not fully differentiate the academic roles and responsibilities resulting in duplication of work and inefficiency. Additionally, the absence of terms of reference for the newly introduced Senior Management Committee reinforces the lack of clarity within the committee structure. It is also noted that the Head of Academic Services chairs the Academic Committee, as well as the assessment boards, which send documents directly to the Academic Committee. This has the potential for creating a conflict of interest. It is desirable that the College reviews the effectiveness of the committee structure to ensure differentiation and clarity of purpose.

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

1.5 Academic standards are reviewed by Edexcel on an annual basis. At present, it is the sole external organisation, with the external examiner online report providing the only reliable external feedback. The College is reliant on its awarding organisation for guidance in the production of relevant programme specifications for HND Business and HND Hospitality provision.

1.6 The College has no involvement in the validation of its own programmes of study. This leaves staff with limited engagement in areas outside teaching and assessment, such as curriculum development, writing learning outcomes and undertaking subject benchmarking. With only two programmes on offer, opportunities for staff to build good practice are limited in scope. However, the College provides a comprehensive range of staff

development activities, which mitigates this situation and ensures that academic staff continuously engage with the Academic Infrastructure, the National Qualification Frameworks and programme specifications.

1.7 The College manages the standards of academic provision through adherence to agreed policies and procedures aligned with external reference points, including the *Code of practice*. Edexcel regulations and guidelines are listed in the programme and student handbooks.

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

1.8 The College has a lead internal verifier to verify the standards of academic assignments, assessment decisions and to conform to all requirements of the awarding organisation. The Chair of the Internal Verification Committee reviews all assignments to ensure they meet Edexcel requirements. The Chair meets with individual tutors to amend assignments where necessary, to achieve compliance with Edexcel learning outcomes.

1.9 The Internal Verification Committee oversees the completion of documentation demonstrating that assessment briefs, assessment decisions, sampling of assessment outcomes and assessment feedback are transparent. To meet Edexcel requirements, the minutes and outcomes of the internal verification process are received and considered at the External Verification Meeting. Currently, the College's documentation to record internal verification is incomplete.

1.10 The external examiner meets the College once a year to approve assessment outcomes and confirm student awards. However, on two separate visits, the external examiner raised a number of recommendations regarding the internal verification of assessments, the provision of assessment feedback, and the presentation of assignment briefs and their relationship with assessment criteria. While the College has met some of the external examiner concerns, it is not yet clear how these matters are being systematically addressed, either operationally or procedurally. For example, the programme monitoring report does not always fully assure the achievement of the external examiner concerns, with specific reference to the review of assignments and assessment verification. It is advisable that the College standardises and fully implements the internal verification process, including assignment development, second marking and sampling, and responses to external examiner reports.

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 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 College has complete responsibility for the management of the quality of the awards it delivers for Edexcel. It has effective mechanisms in place for the management and enhancement of learning opportunities, which reflect those outlined for academic standards in paragraphs 1.1-1.3.

2.2 Programme teams undertake an annual review of the provision, drawing on external examiner reports, enrolment and achievement data, student feedback, peer review and staffing matters. A programme monitoring report is produced, which follows a template, including the setting of targets within agreed timescales and the monitoring of specific actions from the previous year's action plan.

2.3 An annual programme monitoring report, authored by the Head of Academic Services, draws together the key elements from the programme monitoring reports. The reports are presented at the Internal Verification Committee and the Academic Committee. Matters arising from these two meetings and the Student Representative Committee are discussed at the Senior Management Committee. However, these reports are basic, with little analysis of the data or evaluation of the external examiner and student comments. In addition, there is little evidence of thorough scrutiny and evaluation of student statistics in the current minutes and programme reports. It is desirable that the College develops further the evaluation and use of management information data in the annual monitoring process.

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

2.4 The College adheres to Edexcel guidelines and effectively uses the *Code of practice* when developing its quality processes and policies. A quality assurance manual, which is well understood and effectively implemented by staff, contains procedures for programme monitoring and review, gathering student opinion, giving constructive, timely feedback on assessment, teaching and learning, and staff development. A thorough disabilities handbook, closely aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students*, sets out the College's commitment and support for students with learning or physical disabilities. In addition, an admissions policy, associated flow charts and checklist documents are in accordance with the expectations set out in the *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education*. Informal and formal staff and student meetings effectively address issues and concerns, including quality, curriculum development, student feedback and outcomes of staff observation. Senior managers are aware of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and have plans in place for dissemination to staff later in the year.

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

2.5 The College has a number of effective mechanisms to monitor and assure the quality of teaching and learning. This is particularly apparent in the positive way in which it supports newly employed staff. All but one of the teaching staff were appointed at the start of the academic year through a selection procedure requiring candidates to present a mini-lesson. There is an expectation that successful appointees have teaching qualifications and experience. Where this is not the case, the College provides financial support and remission of teaching for the acquisition of teaching qualifications. A sufficient number of highly qualified and professionally experienced staff are in post. The staff handbook supports a thorough induction process, which includes a general introduction to the College and health and safety procedures. One-to-one sessions with the Head of Academic Services and the lead internal verifier ensure that tutors have a full understanding of the College's policies and regulations regarding academic standards and quality processes for teaching and assessing at higher education level.

2.6 The College has a teaching and learning policy, which sets out the expectations placed on academic staff. Tutors are required to upload lesson plans and materials prior to teaching sessions. This process is carefully monitored through weekly audits carried out by a

member of the administration team, and through periodic quality checks by the lead internal verifier. The weekly audit and tracking of lesson plans for online distribution is good practice.

2.7 All staff members have an annual performance appraisal conducted by their line manager. The process includes a review of individual training needs in relation to the skills needed to carry out their job role. Feedback from students, the outcomes of teaching observation and ensuing individual development plans are included in a professional development plan following appraisal. Outcomes for individual staff members are linked to appraisal action plans. The Head of Academic Services collates the outcomes from observations into a report. New tutors undergo a teaching observation early in the academic year, which enables senior managers to assess and evaluate the competency of new staff and offer staff development, where appropriate, for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Staff confirmed that this is a constructive and helpful process, which has led to improvements in their teaching methods. The comprehensive support for new tutors, including one-to-one induction meetings, early lesson observation, opportunity to gain a teaching qualification and clear expectations regarding lesson planning and assessment procedures, is considered good practice.

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

2.8 The College has a wide range of appropriate policies to ensure that students have a successful learning experience. These include admissions, tutorials, disability, assessment, and feedback policies, and comprehensive processes for induction and learning skills support. All students receive an induction, which is comprehensive and informative. Programme-specific information, including an introduction to the virtual learning environment and a student handbook outlining academic regulations, is provided along with wider pastoral information. Students are able to declare learning needs at any stage from pre-enrolment to on-course, facilitated by close and positive working relationships with staff. At the Wembley campus, there are dedicated study skills sessions and, at the Ilford campus, group tutorial sessions provide study skills support as part of the unit delivery. Further academic support is offered through scheduled individual tutorials and bookable one-to-one appointments. A Student Welfare Officer provides practical help and advice on issues such as accommodation and finance.

2.9 Collection and evaluation of student opinion through the student representative system provides appropriate information relating to the effectiveness of student support. The Head of Academic Services carries out a student questionnaire to obtain feedback on learning experiences, including the quality of administration, classroom environment, health and safety, and organisation. Recent outcomes demonstrate high levels of student satisfaction. A Student Representatives Committee operates with clear terms of reference, membership and with frequent formal meetings. The College considers that the Student Representatives Committee plays a critical role in the enhancement of quality assurance procedures and welcomes student attendance at the Academic Committee. Students expressed their appreciation for the opportunity of working closely with the Head of Academic Services and are appreciative of the positive responsiveness of the College to the issues they raised. The College's prompt and effective attention to students' comments is good practice.

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

2.10 The College's procedures for staff development are effective in ensuring the quality of learning opportunities in higher education. While the staff development policy recognises that, ultimately, staff should take ownership of their own professional development, the College positively encourages staff training and development by providing a range of

in-house events and resources for some external activities; notably the acquisition of teaching qualifications. In addition, the College facilitates the participation of part-time staff by providing time to attend during work. The College's wide-ranging staff development support for tutors, including the Academic Infrastructure, use of the virtual learning environment, the quality handbook, and that relating to admissions and student conduct, is good practice.

2.11 The staff induction process is appropriate and thorough. New staff have a probationary period of three to six months and meet with their line manager regularly to assess progress, set targets, and identify areas where development is needed. One-to-one meetings with the Head of Academic Services effectively ensure that staff understand and engage with the expectations of higher education teaching and learning and with the academic regulations and quality processes. Staff teaching on the same unit work as a team to develop the comprehensive unit handbook and assessment activities. This ensures consistency of approach, the sharing of ideas and learning from each other. Staff recognise the need to be self-motivated and proactive in their own development, while being appreciative of collegiate working and the support offered by the College.

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

2.12 The Director and the Head of Academic Services are responsible for the management of resources and for ensuring that there are effective mechanisms in place to establish the adequacy of learning materials, information technology and other resources. The College confirms that there is sufficient and appropriate access to learning resources to enable students to achieve their learning outcomes. In addition to the libraries at both the Wembley and Ilford campuses, students make use of local libraries. At the Wembley campus, students are satisfied with the number and range of texts available to them. However, students at the Ilford campus consider the book stock to be inadequate. Nonetheless, students are very appreciative of the increasing volume of online articles and e-texts, which staff upload onto the virtual learning environment. It is desirable that the College addresses the disparity of library learning resources across the two campuses to ensure parity of support for student learning needs.

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

3 Public information

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

3.1 The College is responsible for the marketing and publicity materials it produces about its Edexcel-accredited higher education programmes. It also has responsibility for all other information produced for students and staff. The clear and easily navigable website is the main vehicle for providing information to the public and to potential students on the College and the programmes it offers. It contains a wide range of useful general and programme-specific information, including advice on seeking financial support. There is an online and a printable application form available.

3.2 The prospectus that was produced in 2011 and aimed at the international student market is being replaced by a new version, which will take into account a wider target audience of UK and EU students. Other information materials include a small, attractive publicity pamphlet, which is distributed to various public locations in the London area, and a regular College newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide a platform for communication between staff and students to share ideas. The current publication contains a report from the Student Representative Committee, explaining the College's responses to students' opinions. It is also made available on the virtual learning environment. The range of publications, including the newsletter and publicity pamphlet, constitutes effective communication to students and is an area of good practice.

3.3 Students receive a well presented and informative student handbook and comprehensive unit handbooks, which are also available on the virtual learning environment. The student handbook contains background details and unit structures for both HND programmes, as well as assessment processes and regulations. It has a useful section on referencing. Unit handbooks detail aims, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, reading lists, teaching and learning strategies, and scheme of work.

3.4 Staff are provided with a staff handbook which provides general employment information. This is available in hard copy and on the virtual learning environment. A quality handbook is produced in hard copy and available on virtual learning environment.

3.5 The virtual learning environment provides easy access for students to lesson plans prior to classes, assessment information and a large range of reading materials. It is well thought of by students.

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

3.6 The Director has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that information is complete, reliable and accurate. However, the Director confirmed that responsibility for approval and the signing off of public information was delegated to the Acting Principal. Examples cited include the College website, the prospectus, and student and programme handbooks. The website is assembled by the Head of Academic Services in deliberation with academic staff and is agreed by senior management.

3.7 A public information policy, which identifies the roles and responsibilities of staff that relate to the management of public information, is well understood and put into operation by tutors. The production of each piece of public information, for example student and programme handbooks, is undertaken by a specific senior member of staff and reviewed by either the Acting Principal or Head of Academic Services to ensure accuracy and completeness. A pro forma for the revision of public information is completed by appropriate staff. Examples of completed forms confirmed these responsibilities, including who the internal reviewer was, the remedial action to be taken (if any), and who was responsible for taking action before signing off by the Acting Principal. Website content and all handbooks are reviewed by the Student Representative Committee. The students confirmed that they are satisfied with the quality of public information.

3.8 The College stated its intention to introduce a version control system to ensure the effective iteration and quality of documents from work-in-progress through to the finished item. While the College has presented clear arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of its public information, it confirmed that it has no formal record of key public documentation being formally audited through its committee system. It is desirable that the College implements a system for monitoring public information.

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 plan³

Nelson College London 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 areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> weekly audit and tracking of lesson plans for online distribution (paragraph 2.6) 	<p>Assign responsibility to an academic administrator to formally audit and to track availability of academic materials (presentations/case studies/lecture notes/ on the virtual tutor on a weekly basis</p> <p>Use the Excel file to track availability of academic materials</p>	Every week during the academic term from week commencing 28 January 2013	Academic Administrator	<p>Good feedback from staff and students about the availability of online materials</p> <p>Minutes of academic committee and student representatives committee meetings affirming that no complaints were raised regarding availability of lesson plans and academic materials</p>	Head of Academic Services	<p>External verifier reports</p> <p>Analysis of feedback from staff and students</p>

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 organisation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive support for new tutors (paragraph 2.7) 	<p>Ensure all new lecturers attend induction programme</p> <p>Arrange mentoring support for all new lecturers</p>	<p>Induction is organised and mentor is provided within first two weeks of new appointment</p> <p>The mentor should meet with the new staff weekly over the first four weeks</p>	<p>Head of Academic Services</p>	<p>Successful implementation of induction and training programme</p> <p>Internal verification of assessment briefs and assessment decisions</p>	<p>Academic Committee</p>	<p>Analysis of feedback from students</p> <p>Feedback from new tutors about the level of support provided</p> <p>Peer review report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prompt and effective responses to student comments (paragraph 2.9) 	<p>To organise student representative committee meetings, make and implement action plan to facilitate enhancement</p> <p>Student feedback to be collected and analysed at the end of each semester</p> <p>Students are invited to attend Academic Committee meetings once per semester</p>	<p>Once per semester</p>	<p>Head of Academic Services/ Academic Administrator</p>	<p>Higher satisfaction rate in the student feedback forms</p> <p>Average satisfaction rate should be improved by 10%</p>	<p>Student Representative Committee</p>	<p>Minutes from the meetings and action plan</p> <p>Student feedback report</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide-ranging staff development support for tutors (paragraph 2.10) 	To organise and provide in-house training for lecturers	Once per semester	Head of Academic Services and Head of Quality Assurance	Development of tutors and job satisfaction Good rating in the student feedback forms	Head of Academic Services	Staff development records/training documentation Analysis of feedback from students and staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective communication to students (paragraph 3.2). 	To update prospectus/publicity pamphlet To produce college newsletter	Once per semester Once per semester	Head of Marketing and Senior Management Committee members Academic Administrator	Effective communication between staff and students to share ideas and opinions	Head of Marketing Head of Academic Services	Public information release documentation Feedback provided by students and staff as evidenced in the minutes of programme representative committee
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> standardise and fully implement the internal verification process (paragraph 1.10). 	New internal verification forms were designed which are being used across all	Every term from January 2013	Chief internal verifier	Effective internal verification process	Head of Quality Assurance	Programme monitoring report

	programmes Audit of internal verification process to ensure that it is implemented in accordance with the guidance			Positive reports from external examiners		External examiners' report
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the effectiveness of the committee structure (paragraph 1.4) 	Modify terms of reference of different committees to eliminate duplication of remits outlining clear scope for each committee	March 2013 and review in June 2013	Principal and Senior Management Committee	To ensure clarity within the committee structure Minutes of the meetings	Director	Feedback from the external review Feedback from Academic Committee and Senior Management Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop further the evaluation and use of management information data (paragraph 2.3) 	To ensure that annual programme monitoring report has an extensive analysis and evaluation of statistics from a range of sources (for example, results, comments from external examiners and feedback from students)	December 2013 Monthly review of data and feedback from academic staff about the level, and effectiveness, of engagement with the	Head of Academic Services	More precise actions and improvements in the College operation Positive comments from Academic Committee	Head of Quality Assurance	Solid programme monitoring report Feedback from the external review

		students and staff				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the disparity of library learning resources (paragraph 2.12) 	<p>To expand the Information Technology Lab and the existing Library</p> <p>To upload online articles and e-texts onto the virtual tutor</p>	<p>Review every June</p> <p>Implementation of the decisions every September</p>	Senior Management Committee (in that the Director and the Head of Academic Services)	<p>To ensure adequacy of learning materials (Information Technology and Library)</p> <p>Student feedback</p> <p>Minutes of Student Representatives Committee</p>	Senior Management Committee	<p>Information Technology Lab and Library</p> <p>Programme monitoring report</p> <p>Analysis of student and staff feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a system for monitoring public information (paragraph 3.8). 	<p>Have version numbers in all public documents</p> <p>Produce a register of public information document</p> <p>Review all of the public information documents in the Senior Management Committee</p>	Every September	Head of Quality Assurance and Head of Marketing	Accuracy and completeness of public information	Senior Management Committee	<p>Feedback from the external review</p> <p>Minutes of the committee meetings</p> <p>Version number in all public documents</p> <p>Updated Public Information Policy</p>

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:

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.

RG 1124 03/13

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

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2013

ISBN 978 1 84979 812 9

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786