



Manchester Metropolitan University

Early Years Professional Status Audit
by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

October 2012

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Key findings about Manchester Metropolitan University

As a result of its Early Years Professional Status Audit carried out in October 2012, the audit team (the team) considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the accreditation standards of awards and links to the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities and support available to EYPS candidates **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the assessment and moderation systems and processes for EYPS **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of candidate data, financial data, internal staff and infrastructure **meets expectations**.

Good practice

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

- the formation of the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance, which has gained the commitment of all partners in the development of consistent approaches to processes and practice; all partners contribute effectively and share good practice openly (paragraph 11).

Strengths

The team has identified the following **strengths**:

- effective processes for mentoring candidates, with well qualified, enthusiastic mentors who are highly praised by the candidates (paragraph 23)
- the involvement of, and overview provided by, the Prime Organisation's University senior managers in supporting the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance development (paragraph 10)
- candidates demonstrate a thorough understanding of the EYPS process and value the award of professional status (paragraph 24)
- candidate tracking systems are effective in providing support for candidate progress (paragraph 6)
- the data management systems are efficient and comprehensive, enabling timely access to specific data sets (paragraph 31)
- the careful way in which the original EYPS programme has been 'phased out', while maintaining its integrity, in parallel with the introduction of the 'new era' EYPS programme (paragraph 12)
- liaison with, and the commitment of, placement providers is a clear strength of the programme (paragraph 25).

Recommendations

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

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

- ensure that all parties regularly attend the senior deliberative and strategic management committee meetings (paragraph 14)
- ensure marketing materials are consistent in the information provided concerning 'targeted groups' (paragraph 33)
- continue to address the comment highlighted in the external moderator's report that all candidates demonstrate Level 6, as presented within *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), in addition to meeting the EYPS standards (paragraph 2)
- make available to all partners the external moderator's report and consider wider dissemination as appropriate (paragraph 3)
- continue in the development of a Northern Alliance Early Years Professional Network to support candidates into employment and during their early career stages (paragraph 7).

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

- gather consistent and comprehensive feedback from candidates on all aspects of the EYPS provision and associated academic programmes (paragraph 16)
- prepare action plans whose actions are specific, time-bound and assigned to a designated individual or organisation (paragraph 13)
- continue in its efforts to meet the Teaching Agency targets for recruitment concerning social disadvantage, gender, and Black and Minority Ethnic candidates (paragraph 34)
- review the implementation of the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure that candidates follow Alliance requirements in addition to those of their setting (paragraph 19).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Audit¹ conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Manchester Metropolitan University (the Prime Organisation). The purpose of the audit is to provide accessible information that indicates whether Prime Organisations have in place:

- effective means of ensuring that the award of EYPS is robust, rigorous and consistent in quality and standards across all pathways
- effective means of enhancing the quality of EYPS provision, particularly by building on information gained through monitoring, internal and external audits, and feedback from stakeholders.

The audit focuses on how the Prime Organisation discharges its stated responsibilities in seven key areas:

- the management of EYPS candidate outcomes
- approach to quality improvement
- approach to safeguarding and welfare of children
- approach to candidate support
- approach to data management
- approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates
- staff management and infrastructure.

The audit applies to those pathways leading to the award of Early Years Professional Status that the Teaching Agency has contracted with the Prime Organisations. The audit was carried out by Dr Phil Bassett (auditor), Liz Hryniewicz (auditor) and Alan Weale (QAA officer).

The audit team conducted the audit in agreement with the Prime Organisation and in accordance with the *Early Years Professional Status Audit: Handbook for Prime Organisations and delivery partners*.² Evidence in support of the audit included:

- a self-evaluation document
- a comprehensive range of policies and operating procedure documentation
- minutes of meetings from key committees and sub-groups
- action plans
- external moderator reports
- assessment feedback pro formas
- data spreadsheets
- the contract from the Teaching Agency and sub-contracts with partners.

Additional information was gained from meetings with staff from each of the partner organisations, candidates, mentors and employers.

The audit team used as a key reference point the *Handbook for Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Prime Organisations and their delivery partners* (April 2012) provided by the Teaching Agency.

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

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx

Manchester Metropolitan University (the University) has an established history of providing education and training at undergraduate and postgraduate level for the early childhood workforce, validating its first Early Years Foundation Degree in 2001. In 2006, the Early Years and Childhood Studies team at the University was chosen by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) as one of 13 organisations to pilot the new graduate EYPS. From January 2007, the University was validated for five years to offer all four pathways leading to EYPS, and in 2008 the Early Years Professional Programme at the University was chosen by CWDC as one of four institutions to pilot the Early Childhood Studies/Early Years Professional pathway, developing a two-year model that built on the first two years of the Early Childhood Studies degree.

Manchester Metropolitan University was awarded the EYPS contract in January 2012 with an allocation of 387 candidates, having formed, as the Prime Organisation, the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance, comprising 10 higher education institution providers working in partnership to deliver EYPS, and covering a region from the East Midlands to the North of England. The organisations in partnership with the Prime Organisation are:

- the Centre for Training and Development (CETAD) at Lancaster University, and the University of Chester (North-West)
- Bradford College, the University of Huddersfield and Sheffield Hallam University (Yorkshire and the Humber)
- the University of Northumbria, Teesside University and the University of Sunderland (North-East)
- the University of Derby (East Midlands).

Statistical candidate data can be found in [Annex 1](#).

At the time of the audit, the Prime Organisation provided the following pathways:

- Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP)
- Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP)
- Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP)
- Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP).

The Prime Organisation's stated responsibilities

The Early Years Professional Northern Alliance (the Alliance) is led by Manchester Metropolitan University's Faculty of Education. The Faculty has appointed a Project Director/Principal Lecturer (with considerable Early Years Professional experience) to lead the Alliance and has nominated an Associate Dean, who is a member of the Faculty Executive Group (again with considerable early years and Early Years Professional experience), to oversee the Alliance. The Alliance is managed by the Alliance Senior Management Group, led by the Project Director, with representation from each of the partner institutions.

The Alliance is administered from the Faculty of Education's Projects Office, where the Manchester Metropolitan University Projects Manager retains responsibility for maintaining accurate data on all aspects of the Teaching Agency contract requirements relating to student allocations, recruitment, retention and outcomes, together with all financial and reporting responsibilities for the Alliance. Reports are provided to the Teaching Agency, the Senior Management Group and to partners.

Detailed findings about Manchester Metropolitan University

1 Management of EYPS candidate outcomes

1 An experienced external moderator has been appointed. The appointment followed defined University processes, which were aligned with the requirements of the Teaching Agency. The external moderator's report for the January GPP indicates a clear level of consistency on assessment and candidate outcomes across all delivery partners.

2 Although delivery partners reported that they had not seen the entire external moderator's report, individual feedback on all candidates had been received and all assessors reported that they had also seen this feedback. The Prime Organisation had arranged general feedback sessions to discuss common issues, for example the matter of Level 6 attainment highlighted in the report. Taking into account the external moderator's report, and from an examination of the candidates' files submitted for assessment, the team concluded that it is **advisable** for the Prime Organisation to continue to address the comment highlighted in the external moderator's report that all candidates demonstrate Level 6, as presented within *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), in addition to meeting the EYPS standards.

3 The team's review of documentary evidence and evidence provided in meetings by staff of the Prime Organisation and delivery partners led the team to conclude that there are adequate review systems and processes in place to promote continuous quality, but agreed that it is **advisable** for the Prime Organisation to make available to all partners the external moderator's report and consider wider dissemination, as appropriate.

4 Internal moderation processes are fit for purpose and robust, clearly set out, and agreed by the Prime Organisation and all delivery partners. Delivery partners reported that they were invited to attend internal moderation events, and the resulting action plan has identified clear actions for progress. However, assessors and mentors felt that the size of the new Alliance meant that they were no longer able to attend the event and use internal moderation processes as a training opportunity, as had been the case previously.

5 Delivery partners train, manage and assure assessors and mentors at a local level, using both standardised and localised processes, including a 'buddying' system, which meets the Teaching Agency Performance Criteria.

6 Candidate outcomes are tracked, and candidate feedback and files indicate a robust and well regarded assessment process. The team formed the opinion that a strength of the Alliance is that candidate tracking systems are effective in providing support for candidate progress. There is some variation in the completion and achievement rates on the GPP across the Alliance, ranging from 67 per cent at the lowest to 100 per cent for the highest.

7 EYPS destination data is tracked and the Alliance is currently developing a system to record the impact of Early Years Professionals in the workplace. Although strong workplace and academic liaison is evident, placement providers and local authority staff are not at present involved in preparing candidates for employment. The team therefore considers it **advisable** to continue in the development of a Northern Alliance Early Years Professional Network to support candidates into employment, and during their early career stages.

8 Candidates, the Prime Organisation and delivery partner staff were clear on the appeals process, following either their delivery partner or Prime Organisation procedures, as appropriate to the nature of the appeal.

9 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets nearly all of the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to EYPS candidate outcomes.

2 Approach to quality improvement

10 The Alliance has established a Senior Management Group to ensure the effective management of the partnership. Senior managers within the University, having responsibility for the Faculty of Education and quality assurance, also maintain oversight of developments within the Alliance. Having met with members of the senior management team and delivery partner representatives, and having scrutinised minutes of the senior management steering group meetings, the team concluded that the involvement of, and overview provided by, the Prime Organisation's University senior managers in supporting the Alliance development is a strength of the provision.

11 The Senior Management Group has provided effective leadership for the new EYPS partnership by establishing common procedures and requirements, with partners drawing on their individual experiences to contribute to the design of new regulations and processes. All partners demonstrate a commitment to the Alliance and feel that they are involved fully in its development. The team recognise as **good practice** the formation of the Alliance, which has gained the commitment of all partners in the development of consistent approaches to processes and practice; all partners contribute effectively and share good practice openly.

12 The team explored the approach taken by the Alliance to managing the phasing-out of the first edition of the EYPS programme, which was offered from 2007 until 2011, and the introduction of the new EYPS programmes, from 2012. As a result of their meetings with Prime Organisation staff and the delivery partner representatives, the team formed the opinion that a strength of the Alliance's approach to quality is the careful way in which the original EYPS programme has been phased out, while maintaining its integrity, in parallel with the introduction of the 'new era' EYPS programme.

13 Each partner is required to evaluate its performance and present an action plan to the Senior Management Group. These, together with reports from the sub-groups and the external moderator, inform the Alliance in setting the overarching action plan for the next period of operation. The team reviewed the action plans and found that they were inconsistent in the specificity of actions, the assigning of responsibility and the setting of deadlines for completion. Members of the Senior Management Group acknowledged this finding and are aware of the need to ensure greater consistency. The team concluded that it would be **desirable** for the Senior Management Group to prepare action plans whose actions are specific, time-bound and assigned to a designated individual or organisation.

14 A review of the minutes of the Senior Management Group illustrates that not all representatives attend all meetings and that for some meetings, including consecutive meetings, some organisations do not have a representative present. The Prime Organisation makes available the minutes of the meetings to the absent organisations in good time and endeavours to make telephone contact with their representatives to update them on the outcomes of the meeting. The Senior Management Group and the Prime Organisation recognise the need for all partners to be represented at the major meetings and are considering ways in which this may be achieved; however, given the important strategic and managerial responsibilities of the Senior Management Group, the team believes that it is **advisable** for the Alliance to ensure that all parties regularly attend the senior deliberative and strategic management committee meetings.

15 The partners within the Alliance attend a number of local forums and EYPS networks, often organised by their local authorities. These are seen as important in communicating with previous candidates, and for tracking them, in addition to informing a range of stakeholders on the work of the Alliance. These networks are valued by the local authority representatives. Currently, the Senior Management Group is investigating ways in which it can establish its own EYPS network for the Alliance.

16 Systems and processes to allow candidates, placement settings and employers to feed back on all elements of the EYPS programme are developmental but currently inconsistent across the Alliance. Candidates, mentors, placement providers and employers confirm that the ways in which they are approached for feedback are varied, if they are approached at all. Candidates confirm that they do not have the opportunity to provide feedback on their placement, their mentor and, in some instances, on their delivery partner provision (see also paragraph 26). The audit team considers that it is **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to gather consistent and comprehensive feedback from candidates on all aspects of the EYPS provision and associated academic programmes.

17 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets nearly all of the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to quality improvement.

3 Approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children

18 The Alliance has a clear, up to date and comprehensive Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is used in a systematic way across all the delivery partners. This has replaced the individual policies held by each delivery partner. This gives detailed guidance to both tutors/assessors and students, and includes a flow chart of actions to be taken in the context of EYPS assessment. The team found that all Prime Organisation and delivery partner staff they met were clear on the policy and its implementation.

19 Candidate training materials from two delivery partners exemplified the detailed training materials used with candidates, which also refer to additional development opportunities. Two further examples of candidate work indicated how the standards relating to safeguarding and protection of children are met. Meetings with candidates indicated that while all were secure on the application of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy within their settings or on placement, not all were aware of the Policy requirement to inform the Prime Organisation in the event of an issue at work involving them. The team considers it **desirable** that the Prime Organisation review the implementation of the Alliance Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure that candidates follow Alliance requirements in addition to those of their setting.

20 An explicit process is in place to ensure that all candidates have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check prior to undertaking a placement. The process is understood by delivery partners and candidates. All candidates and placement staff met by the team were clear about this stringent requirement of the Policy. A central database held by the Alliance administration office is updated weekly with candidates' CRB numbers from each delivery partner. This system is rigorously monitored by the Alliance Project Administrator.

21 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children.

4 Approach to candidate support

22 Effective online information systems are used via the virtual learning environment and are updated regularly. Two candidates met by the team reported that information was occasionally inaccurate, but all candidates agreed that the virtual learning environment was useful for discussion and networking.

23 The Alliance has effective processes for mentoring candidates, with well qualified, enthusiastic mentors who are highly praised by the candidates. Clear guidelines for mentor support appear in the Candidate Handbook, and include the establishment of an individual learning plan, which is managed by the candidate and mentor throughout the EYPS process. Candidate files and meetings reflect the use of this individualised support. All delivery partners use consistent mentoring paperwork. Candidates on different pathways receive different mentoring arrangements, but on both entry pathways at all delivery partners, candidates are allocated a university mentor and a placement mentor, wherever possible. Candidates referred positively to the support given by knowledgeable mentors, often Early Years Professionals themselves. Interviews with candidates, mentors and placement staff confirmed the key role of the mentor in tracking student progress following the candidates' 'development review', and all candidates interviewed as part of the audit reported that feedback from the development review was timely and effective. A support and guidance document for mentors indicates that mentoring support is candidate-led, and this was confirmed in meetings with Prime Organisation mentors, placement mentors and candidates. The team considers that the effective processes for mentoring candidates, with well qualified, enthusiastic mentors who are highly praised by the candidates, is a strength of the programme.

24 The well thought-through programme design helps candidates to clarify their understanding of the EYPS standards and provides ample guidance on how these may be evidenced. As a result of their scrutiny of candidate files, and from meetings with candidates, the team was confident of the candidates' progress and was assured that candidates demonstrate a thorough understanding of the EYPS process and value the award of professional status; the team considered this to be a strength of the programme.

25 Appropriate placement selection is evident, and placement providers interviewed were clear about the requirements for their roles and responsibilities. Placements are selected using specific criteria and are quality assured and monitored through a visiting Prime Organisation mentor and through an evaluation from the placement of the student experience. Candidates reported that they were well prepared for placement and that they were supported effectively throughout. The team considers the Alliance's liaison with, and the commitment of, placement providers to be a clear strength of the programme.

26 Although candidates and mentors reported on informal systems for evaluating their experiences to the partners within the Alliance, there was limited formal evaluation of the student experience of the mentoring available or of their placement experience. The team was also unable to identify any evidence of a system or process for placement de-selection where quality issues are identified. No consistent or comprehensive student evaluation data sets were available from the Prime Organisation and/or from delivery partners at the time of the audit, although a copy of a template that is available for such evaluations was made available to the team (see also paragraph 16).

27 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to candidate support.

5 Approach to data management

28 The Prime Organisation has established effective and comprehensive processes and procedures for the gathering, collation and reporting of key data sets to all appropriate stakeholders. The Prime Organisation Projects Manager is responsible for maintaining accurate records, and a calendar of dates - identified for each programme pathway - is distributed to all partners to ensure that they are aware of when identified data needs to be submitted. Partners confirmed that they were aware of the calendar and the requirements for reporting. The Projects Manager is responsible for verifying all data with partners before it is submitted to the Teaching Agency for reporting purposes. The Teaching Agency has confirmed that 'the Northern Alliance have performed well in terms of the timeliness, accessibility and accuracy of data provided in delivery of this contract to date'.

29 The team reviewed a variety of data sets, including recruitment, retention and progression statistics, and internal and external moderation of candidate results. The maintenance of individual candidate records, provided by the Projects Manager, confirmed that the information was detailed and comprehensive. To date, the Alliance has not been established long enough to enable the Senior Management Group to undertake trend analysis on this data; however, the quality of the information available will assist in strategic decision-making as the Alliance matures.

30 Manchester Metropolitan University holds International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 for its quality control procedures and ISO27001 for its information security management systems. Guidance has been provided to all Alliance partners to ensure that the collection of data complies with these requirements, and the EYPS administration team is developing a Manual of Working Instructions to ensure that practices are consistent across the Alliance. The team reviewed the draft document and noted the detailed guidance on data collection and management information process requirements and security contained within the sections.

31 The team concluded that a strength of the provision is the implementation of data management systems that are efficient and comprehensive, enabling timely access to specific data sets. In addition, the candidate tracking systems that are effective in providing support for candidate progress.

32 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to data management.

6 Approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates

33 A clear marketing strategy is in place that allows individual delivery partners to produce and disseminate marketing materials aimed at meeting local requirements. All materials used the Alliance logo, but varied in their approach to using a Teaching Agency endorsement and to specifying the strategic objectives for under-represented targeted groups and for areas of social disadvantage, as required under the EYPS contractual agreement. The team concluded that it is **advisable** for Prime Organisation to ensure marketing materials are consistent in the information provided concerning 'targeted groups'.

34 Although the Alliance has not yet met its target for these strategic priorities, it is discussing strategies to address these areas. The team was supportive of their deliberations but concluded that it is **desirable** that the Alliance continue in its efforts to meet the Teaching Agency targets for recruitment concerning social disadvantage, gender, and Black and Minority Ethnic candidates.

35 Recruitment and selection information records and details candidate information effectively. A marketing action plan identifies GCSE Maths and English as a barrier to the successful recruitment of appropriate candidates, and includes actions to address this issue at an early stage through improved liaison with further education colleges and settings. This is designed to significantly reduce the number of candidates who apply but do not meet the entry requirements.

36 Candidates report that they are well prepared and informed about EYPS both before and during the programme. Candidates on the practitioner pathways were working in the early years sector when starting the programme. All candidates interviewed during the audit reported that they had been given detailed and appropriate advice to ensure that they were placed onto the correct pathway, following guidance laid down in the Prime Organisation's Handbook.

37 Induction, needs analysis and action planning processes are robust and meet candidate requirements. Candidates, mentors and assessors met by the team described a flexible and systematic process, which was evident in candidate files and acknowledged in the external moderator's report.

38 Clear processes are in place to monitor and review individual candidate journeys. The processes involve mentors, assessors, and the EYPS Programme Lead at the Prime Organisation and at each Alliance delivery partner. Achievement rates for the January 2012 GPP are just below benchmarks at 85 per cent achievement (benchmark 90 per cent), but retention rates are at 93 per cent, which is above the benchmark (benchmark 85 per cent), although this varies across delivery partners.

39 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates.

7 Staff management and infrastructure

40 The Prime Organisation has established a Senior Management Group, with representation from all partner organisations, to provide the strategic direction of the Alliance and to take management decisions relating to performance. This Group is supported by four sub-groups, who report to it, with representatives from each region on each sub-group. As identified earlier (see paragraph 14), the effectiveness of these sub-groups depends on regular attendance and participation from the members.

41 The Alliance has developed a variety of methods to communicate with its partners. The Prime Organisation has provided shared access to its virtual learning environment to ensure that the Lead Academic and Lead Administrator within each partner organisation may access the minutes from the Senior Management Group and its sub-groups; policy documents; and specific templates to be used across the Alliance. Certain training materials are also made available to all partners, for example those for Safeguarding training. Telephone contact and email communication are also used regularly.

42 During the formation of the Alliance, each partner was asked to confirm the appropriateness of its training facilities and the human and physical resources available to deliver the programmes. Plans are in place for the Chair of the Senior Management Group and the Manchester Metropolitan University EYPS Project Director to undertake a site visit to each partner, during this academic year, to monitor and quality assure each partner's provision.

43 Communication between the Alliance, mentors and placement providers is mainly through the individual partner organisations. Each partner organisation has established relationships with placement providers over a period of time, and has a group of trained mentors within their organisations and placement providers. Materials common to the Alliance are distributed via the partner organisations to the individual placement providers and mentors, and each partner provides specific training to these individuals. Currently, the Alliance provides no centrally directed training, but members of staff are able to access staff development opportunities from their individual organisations. The collaborative meetings of the Alliance are seen by partner staff as a means of disseminating good practice and sharing information.

44 The Alliance Senior Management Group requires each partner to undertake a self-evaluation annually. This provides the Prime Organisation with a review of each partner's success in meeting performance and quality assurance requirements. The action plans resulting from this self-evaluation exercise are reviewed by the Senior Management Group, which has identified that there are no significant areas of concern. However, the Prime Organisation is clear that it has not met the targets set by the Teaching Agency and that its priority is to meet all future targets (see Section 6).

45 The team considers that Manchester Metropolitan University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to staff management and infrastructure.

Action plan³

Manchester Metropolitan University action plan relating to the Early Years Professional Status Audit October 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The audit team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the formation of the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance, which has gained the commitment of all partners in the development of consistent approaches to processes and practice; all partners contribute effectively and share good practice openly (paragraph 11) 	<p>Require all partners to cascade the QAA report (which has already been disseminated to them) to assessors and mentors, highlighting the recognition of good practice in order to build, in individual institutions, on the open and collegiate approach of the Alliance, thereby further developing consistent practices</p> <p>Maintain and further develop the open and collegiate approach</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>At each point where the</p>	<p>EYP Project Director and lead academics within each partner institution</p> <p>SMG and associated sub-groups</p>	<p>Assessors and Mentors recognise the strengths of consistent practices across the Alliance</p> <p>Alliance retains the commitment of partners to</p>	<p>Senior Management Group (SMG)</p>	<p>External moderator's reports indicate consistent and effective practice across the Alliance</p> <p>Policies, procedures and practices continue to be</p>

³ The Prime Organisation 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 Teaching Agency.

	to enhance consistent practices	Teaching Agency, external moderator, QAA or Alliance self-evaluation processes requires review of practices		consistent practices		developed and agreed across the Alliance. Evidence from all self-evaluation documents and monitoring visits indicates effective implementation
The audit team identified the following areas of strength within the Prime Organisation:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective processes for mentoring candidates, with well qualified, enthusiastic mentors who are highly praised by the candidates (paragraph 23) 	Recruit and continue to support well qualified mentors, including practitioners who have achieved the EYP Status	<p>As and when new mentors are needed</p> <p>Mentor training carried out regularly, according to local need</p>	EYP Project Director and Programme Leaders within each partner institution	A suitable bank of mentors is maintained, and mentoring continues to be effective	SMG	Partner self-evaluations, Prime Organisation monitoring, and feedback from 80% of candidates continue to demonstrate mentors are well qualified and effective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the involvement of, and overview provided by, the Prime Organisation's University senior managers in 	Continue to secure the involvement of the Faculty of Education Executive Group (FEG) and central university	As needed for the continued successful running and further	EYP Project Director and Chair of SMG	Continued involvement of the Prime Organisation's University senior managers in	SMG and FEG	Effective senior management support is available at key points and enables the Alliance to discharge its

supporting the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance development (paragraph 10)	departments in the running and further development of the Alliance	development of the Alliance		supporting the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance		responsibilities to meet Teaching Agency requirements in a timely fashion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • candidates demonstrate a thorough understanding of the EYPS process, and value the award of professional status (paragraph 24) 	<p>Continue to provide training which secures candidates' understanding of the EYP process</p> <p>Continue to promote the value of EYPS through a range of activities and media, which will include attendance at recruitment fairs, building further links with schools and FE colleges, and developing case studies of successful candidates</p>	Ongoing	Prime Organisation and partner institutions	<p>Training secures candidates' understanding of the assessment process</p> <p>Candidates continue to value and promote EYP Status</p>	SMG	<p>70 % of all candidate feedback demonstrates training has secured their understanding of the assessment process</p> <p>Destination data identifies that 70% of candidates have valued and promoted their EYP status</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • candidate tracking systems are effective in providing support for candidate progress (paragraph 6) 	Continue to provide candidate tracking systems which are effective in supporting candidate progress	Ongoing	Partner Institutions and Project Manager in the Prime Organisation	Candidate tracking systems continue to be effective in tracking progress	SMG	Teaching Agency requirements are met effectively and acknowledged

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the data management systems are efficient and comprehensive, enabling timely access to specific data sets (paragraph 31) 	Continue to manage data management systems that are efficient and comprehensive, enabling timely access to specific data sets	Ongoing	Partner Institutions and Project Manager in the Prime Organisation	Data management systems continue to be efficient and comprehensive, and enable timely access to specific data sets	SMG	Internal, Teaching Agency and QAA requirements are met effectively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the careful way in which the original EYPS programme has been 'phased out', while maintaining its integrity in parallel with the introduction of the 'new era' EYPS programme (paragraph 12) 	Continue to carefully support and manage candidates' preparation and assessment against the old standards, whilst supporting more recent candidates in their understanding of the assessment process with the revised standards	Until old standards are phased out, in July 2013	Partners and Prime Organisation	Candidates are supported effectively whether being assessed on the old or revised standards	SMG	Candidate feedback and outcomes demonstrate that candidates have been supported effectively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> liaison with, and the commitment of, placement providers is a clear strength of the programme (paragraph 25). 	Continue to maintain and develop links with placement providers who are able to offer candidates effective placement experiences	Ongoing	Partners and Prime Organisation	Candidates are supported effectively by placement providers	SMG	80% of candidate feedback demonstrates that candidates have been effectively supported on placement
		Ongoing	Partners and Prime Organisation	Links are maintained and developed with placement providers	SMG	80% of placement provider feedback demonstrates effective communication

	Provide feedback to placement providers to highlight good practice in supporting candidates, and areas for further development	July 2013	Partners and Prime Organisation	Placement providers' feedback is provided which enables them to identify areas of strength and areas for development	SMG	between them and partner institutions Candidate satisfaction remains at 80%, and enhancement by placement providers following feedback leads to a further 3% improvement in candidate satisfaction
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the Prime Organisation to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that all parties regularly attend the senior deliberative and strategic management committee meetings (paragraph 14) 	Contract variation to be issued to all partners setting out attendance expectations for SMG	December 2012	MMU legal department	Regular attendance at meetings	SMG	Monitoring of partner attendance at each SMG
	Develop a calendar of dates and meeting times to enable partners to forward plan	December 2012	SMG Chair and EYPS Project Director	Regular attendance at meetings	SMG	Annual evaluation of functioning of SMG indicates that all partners find the calendar useful, and it enables them to attend
	Identify suitable web based or	March 2013	E-learning support team at	A suitable e-conferencing	SMG	A suitable e-conferencing

	conferencing approaches to facilitate attendance at meetings		MMU	facility is in place		facility is in place which facilitates partner engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure marketing materials are consistent in the information provided concerning 'targeted groups' (paragraph 33) 	Continue to review all marketing materials, including partner websites, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that consistent information is provided	In advance of each period of recruitment (March, May, July, October)	SMG Recruitment and Marketing Sub-group	Consistent messages are provided for candidates	SMG	Monitoring of marketing materials demonstrates consistent messages are provided for candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to address the comment highlighted in the external moderator's report that all candidates demonstrate Level 6, as presented within <i>The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland</i> (FHEQ), in addition to meeting the EYPS standards (paragraph 2) 	<p>Standardise the approach to candidate preparation for written tasks to ensure candidates are able to demonstrate Level 6</p> <p>Ensure assessors receive training on recognising and noting Level 6 on candidate written tasks</p> <p>Adapt ASS:02 to include comment box for assessors to record Level 6</p>	<p>January 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p>	<p>SMG Pathway Development Sub-group</p> <p>SMG Assessment and Moderation Sub-group</p> <p>SMG Assessment and Moderation Sub-group</p>	<p>External moderator report indicates candidates demonstrate Level 6</p> <p>External moderator report indicates candidates demonstrate Level 6</p> <p>External moderator report indicates that candidates demonstrate</p>	<p>SMG</p> <p>SMG</p> <p>SMG</p>	<p>Monitoring of external moderator report indicates all candidates demonstrate Level 6</p> <p>Monitoring of external moderator report indicates all candidates demonstrate Level 6</p> <p>Internal moderation monitors the effectiveness of comment box in enabling assessors</p>

				Level 6		to make judgements on candidates' evidence at Level 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make available to all partners the external moderator's report and consider wider dissemination as appropriate (paragraph 3) 	External moderator's report disseminated to all partners and relevant parts of the report made available to candidates to support their preparation for assessment	November 2013 (completed) and following each round of Moderation	EYPS Project Director and SMG Assessment and Moderation Sub-group	Actions and recommendations in external moderator report are implemented	SMG	Monitoring through internal and external moderation processes indicates actions and recommendations of external moderator are implemented in a timely way
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue in the development of a Northern Alliance Early Years Professional Network to support candidates into employment and during their early career stages (paragraph 7). 	Develop a framework and suitable resources (based on existing good practice across the Alliance) to ensure that candidates are supported into employment during their early career stages	Initial discussions January 2013, to be completed by June 2013	SMG Pathway Development Sub-group	<p>Development of overall framework used by partners</p> <p>Candidates are signposted to relevant sources of support and information available at entry and exit points</p>	SMG	<p>Candidate feedback on framework indicates its usefulness in supporting them into employment</p> <p>Candidate feedback on signposting of support and information indicates the usefulness of information</p>
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the Prime Organisation to:						

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather consistent and comprehensive feedback from candidates on all aspects of the EYPS provision and associated academic programmes (paragraph 16) 	<p>Implement the agreed Alliance-wide consistent and comprehensive EYPS feedback arrangements</p>	<p>January 2013</p>	<p>Programme Leaders in partner institutions reporting to SMG Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Sub-group</p>	<p>Candidates are provided with consistent and comprehensive feedback opportunities for all aspects of the EYP Programme</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>Partner self-evaluation document contains evidence of consistent and comprehensive feedback on all aspects of the EYP Programme</p>
	<p>Ensure that these feedback arrangements are known and understood by candidates, mentors, placement providers and employers</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p>Programme Leaders in partner institutions reporting to SMG Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Sub-group</p>	<p>Candidates, mentors, placement providers and employers are clear about the Alliance's mechanisms for feedback on all aspects of the programme</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>Monitoring of analysis of feedback from candidates, mentors, placement providers and employers within partner institutions demonstrates that feedback arrangements are known and understood</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare action plans whose actions are specific, time-bound and assigned to a designated individual or organisation (paragraph 13) 	<p>Review the self-evaluation document to ensure fitness for purpose and to reduce duplication</p>	<p>January 2013</p>	<p>SMG Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Sub-group</p>	<p>Self-evaluation document supports the self-evaluation process</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>MMU's annual monitoring of partner self-evaluation documents provides evidence of contract KPI percentages being achieved</p>
	<p>Link the partner and Alliance action plans to the QAA format in order to improve</p>	<p>January 2013</p>	<p>SMG Continuous Monitoring and Improvement</p>	<p>Greater consistency across the action planning process</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>Monitoring of all action plans demonstrates improved</p>

	<p>consistency</p> <p>Provide guidance to partners about completing action plans</p>	<p>January 2013</p>	<p>Sub-group</p> <p>SMG Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Sub-group</p>	<p>improves clarity of focus and priority</p> <p>Partners report that the guidance provided has supported their action planning</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>consistency and clarity of focus and priority</p> <p>MMU's monitoring of all partners' action planning against Action Plan Performance Level Indicators indicates the use of SMART targets, which drive improvement against contract KPIs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue in its efforts to meet the Teaching Agency targets for recruitment concerning social disadvantage, gender, and Black and Minority Ethnic candidates (paragraph 34) 	<p>Continue to implement actions identified in the under-recruitment plan for Teaching Agency (appended to this document)</p>	<p>In preparation for each intake of candidates, January and September</p>	<p>SMG Recruitment and Marketing Sub-group and EYP Project Director</p>	<p>As identified in the under-recruitment plan</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>As identified in the under-recruitment plan</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the implementation of the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure that candidates follow Alliance 	<p>Ensure consistent approach across the Alliance by including policy in candidate, assessor and placement handbooks</p>	<p>April 2013</p>	<p>SMG Pathway Development Sub-group and Programme Leaders in partner institutions</p>	<p>Safeguarding policy included in candidate, assessor and placement handbooks</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>Following induction and initial preparation, 80 % of candidate evaluations confirm their understanding of Alliance policy in addition to setting policy</p>

<p>requirements in addition to those of their setting (paragraph 19).</p>	<p>Produce training materials for candidates, assessors and mentors that provide a threshold level of safeguarding training, which is consistent across the Alliance</p>	<p>April 2013</p>	<p>SMG Pathway Development Sub-group and Programme Leaders in partner institutions</p>	<p>Training materials are consistent across the Alliance</p>	<p>SMG</p>	<p>Evidence, to include training materials and candidate evaluations scrutinised during all annual monitoring visits, demonstrates a consistent approach across the Alliance</p>
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Annex 1: Candidate statistics

January 2012 intake

	Manchester Metropolitan University	CETAD	University of Chester	Bradford College	Sheffield Hallam University	University of Huddersfield	University of Derby	Teesside University	University of Sunderland	Northumbria University	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	25	47	12	9	7	6	23	0	6	5	146	140	96%
UPP	27	4	2	8	10	16	12	12	0	10	104	101	97%
GEP	10	5	0	2	0	8	12	0	0	4	68	41	60%
UEP	17	0	0	2	0	5	3	21	0	0	72	48	67%
Total	79	56	14	21	17	35	50	33	6	19	390	330	85%

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - January 2012 intake

	Candidates from Deprived Areas	% of cohort	Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates	% of cohort	Men into Childcare	% of cohort
GPP	11	8%	3	2%	1	2%
UPP	22	22%	2	2%	0	0
GEP	12	29%	18	44%	1	2%
UEP	10	21%	6	13%	0	0

Retention and success - January 2012 intake

	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Deferred	Completed or due to complete	% retained	Assessed	Successful completion	% success
GPP	140	9	3	131	94%	131	120	92%
UPP	101	3	0	98	97%			
GEP	41	7	0	34	83%			
UEP	48	2	0	46	96%			

September 2012 intake

	Manchester Metropolitan University	CETAD	University of Chester	Bradford College	Sheffield Hallam University	University of Huddersfield	University of Derby	Teesside University	University of Sunderland	Northumbria University	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	20	27	0	4	0	5	15	4	10	11	118	96	81%
UPP	8	14	0	2	14	10	19	11	0	20	150	98	65%
GEP	19	8	10	4	11	8	18	0	19	7	133	104	78%
UEP	26	0	10	3	9	5	4	17	0	0	82	74	90%
Total	73	49	20	13	34	28	56	32	29	38	483	372	77%

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - September 2012 intake

	Candidates from Deprived Areas	% of cohort	BME	% of cohort	Men into Childcare	% of cohort
GPP	22	23%				
UPP	16	15%				
GEP					4	4%
UEP					2	3%

Note 1: The TA recruitment report used for September 2012 only asked for candidates from deprived areas for the GPP & UPP Pathways.

Note 2: The TA recruitment report used for September 2012 did not ask for a breakdown of BME per pathway. Overall, the total number of BME candidates for the EYPS Northern Alliance is 28.

Note 3: The TA recruitment report used for September 2012 only asked for a breakdown of Men into Childcare for the GEP & UEP pathways.

Annex 2: 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 Early Years Professional Status Audit can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx.

Annex 3: 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 *Early Years Professional Status Audit: Handbook for Prime Organisations and delivery partners*: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx.

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**.

assessor: Person employed by the Prime Organisation or its partners to assess a candidate's competency against the EYPS standards.

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.

delivery partners: Any parties (as notified to and agreed by the Teaching Agency) that are required by the contractor to delivery any part of an EYPS contract.

Early Years Professional: A person who has achieved Early Years Professional Status. Early Years Professionals work across the diverse range of settings that make up the early years sector. They demonstrate excellent practice and leadership.

Early Years Professional Status (EYPS): A graduate-level professional accreditation for the early years workforce.

EYPS pathway: One of four packages of training, assessment and accreditation available for candidates to gain EYPS (as defined within the EYPS contract).

EYPS standards: The skills, knowledge and experience required to receive EYPS, as defined by the Secretary of State.

external moderator: The purpose of external moderation is to provide independent assurance that the quality and reliability of internal moderation and assessment is appropriate. The role of external moderator for EYPS is similar in nature, though not directly comparable, to that of external examiners used widely across higher education institutions.

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*.

Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP): For people with a degree and limited experience of working with children from birth to five, but who are looking to pursue a career working in early years. Normal duration 12 months; maximum duration two years.

Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP): For graduates currently working in the sector who require a small amount of learning or experience before they can demonstrate the EYPS standards. Normal duration six months; maximum duration nine months.

internal moderator: The Prime Organisation is responsible for carrying out internal moderation of all assessment outcomes. An internal moderator will:

- check that all judgements made during assessment are sound
- monitor the quality of assessment to ensure consistency and standards
- provide assurance that the standard and reliability of assessment is appropriate.

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.

mentor: A person employed by the contactor to provide a development expert/novice relationship which supports a candidate to become autonomous through dialogue and skilled questioning.

moderation: The process by which the contractor will review assessment outcomes and ensure the consistent application of processes defined by the Teaching Agency.

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

Prime Organisation: The training provider with a direct contract with the Teaching Agency to deliver EYPS from January 2012.

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

quality: See **academic quality**.

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

setting: A childcare setting can be a nursery, crèche, pre-school, day-care centre, children's centre or the location of a childminder or nanny.

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**.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code): 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**).

Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP): For undergraduates completing a degree, for example in Early Childhood Studies. Normal duration 12 months; maximum duration two years.

Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP): For undergraduates currently working in the sector that require a small amount of learning or experience before they can demonstrate the EYPS standards. Normal duration six months; maximum duration nine months.

work placement: A sustained period of learning for candidates on EYPS pathways which takes place in a setting registered to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and enable opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and experience defined by the EYPS standards. A childcare setting can be a nursery, crèche, pre-school, day-care centre, children's centre or the location of a childminder or nanny.

RG 1054 02/13

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© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2013

ISBN 978 1 84979 730 6

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

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786