



University of Worcester

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

November 2012

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Key findings about the University of Worcester

As a result of its Early Years Professional Status Audit carried out in November 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**:

- inclusion of candidates in mentor training sessions by Newman University College, which facilitates good understanding of the role of the mentor by candidates (paragraph 32)
- the use of an e-learning safeguarding module by the Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning, which ensures a consistent and specific approach to safeguarding training (paragraph 27).

Strengths

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

- the career guidance located in the undergraduate module of the degree programme (paragraph 10)
- the wide range of mechanisms used to identify and disseminate good practice (paragraph 16)
- the thorough and effective quality assurance and action planning process, which is leading to measurable improvements (paragraph 15)
- the use of assessor training sessions to gain staff feedback and review provision in order to improve the assessment process in settings (paragraph 17)
- student representation at Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings, which has resulted in timely improvements to provision (paragraph 21)
- interactive practical sessions provided by the Prime Organisation that give candidates a sound understanding of how to meet EYPS standards (paragraph 8)
- the virtual learning environment, which encourages candidate engagement including good use of discussion boards (paragraph 31)
- the feedback opportunities at Progress and Development Reviews (paragraph 6)
- the effective management and access arrangements, which provide timely and accurate information to staff and partners for financial and other aspects of provision (paragraph 41)

- the effectiveness of the recruitment strategy that encourages male applications and enrolment onto pathways (paragraph 48)
- the communication mechanisms between the partners and the Prime Organisation, which contribute to the maintenance of quality (paragraph 54).

Recommendations

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

Advisable

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

- include specific and consistent safeguarding training across all pathways and for assessors (paragraph 28)
- effectively implement the Prime Organisation's safeguarding policy with regard to recording Criminal Records Bureau data (paragraph 25).

Desirable

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

- develop and implement a monitoring process for ensuring that partners carry out external moderators' recommendations promptly (paragraph 3)
- re-evaluate the appropriateness of the University of Worcester External Examining Policy and Procedure and amend the external moderation process with regard to the specific requirements for EYPS (paragraph 1)
- develop a consistent and accessible approach to careers guidance across all pathways (paragraph 11)
- implement a transparent process for the development of the candidates' understanding of the mentoring process and mentor role within the Prime Organisation (paragraph 33)
- re-evaluate the appropriateness of the University of Worcester Placement Policy and amend the procedure regarding location and distance from the University of EYPS placements (paragraph 36)
- develop a structured approach to providing key placement information to candidates to ensure they are able to source and visit an appropriate placement (paragraph 35)
- introduce disability screening during induction for all candidates to ensure individual needs are met (paragraph 30)
- ensure that the application and induction process gives candidates appropriate and clear information about the pathway on which they are enrolled (paragraph 51).

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 the University of Worcester (the Prime Organisation). The purpose of the audit is to provide accessible information which 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 Mrs Chelle Davison, Mr Rob Mason (auditors) and Mr 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 written self-evaluation document with supporting documentary evidence and meetings with staff from the Prime Organisation and delivery partners, and with placement provider representatives and mentors.

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](#).

The University of Worcester, as the Prime Organisation, has been delivering EYPS programmes through a government contract since 2007. It holds one of eight national contracts with the Teaching Agency for the delivery of pathways leading to the award of the EYPS. The pathways are delivered by a consortium of delivery partners that includes:

- University of Gloucestershire
- University College Plymouth St Mark and St John (Marjon)
- Newman University College

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

- Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL).

Candidate entry points are January and September. EYPS provision is managed within the Institute of Education, one of six academic departments in the University of Worcester.

In January 2012, the Prime Organisation had 154 candidates on programmes across the partnership and had met 91 per cent of its contract allocation. In September 2012, 245 candidates were enrolled, meeting 81 per cent of the allocation. Further statistical data is available in [Annex 1](#).

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

- Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP) (6 Months)
- Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP) (12 Months)
- Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP) (12 Months)
- Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP) (18 months from level 5 of a BA Hons degree).

The Prime Organisation's stated responsibilities

The Prime Organisation states its responsibilities to be:

- the delivery of high-quality, well-planned training, assessment and accreditation of the EYPS pathways
- the recruitment to target of high-quality candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds, and retaining candidates through to successful completion
- the establishment and management of subcontracting arrangements with partners to manage, administrate and support delivery of the EYPS pathways from enquiry through to delivery and career destination
- the provision of robust quality assurance procedures to meet the needs of the EYPS pathways as required by the Teaching Agency.

Detailed findings about the University of Worcester

1 Management of EYPS candidate outcomes

1 External moderators are sourced and appointed using the University of Worcester's (the University's) regulations for the appointment of external examiners. The process is well managed through close scrutiny of applications by the EYPS Project Manager, who makes recommendations for appointments to the University for its consideration. Two external moderators have been appointed using the process. The moderators' role is clearly explained to them in their appointment letter. A number of internal moderation meetings have occurred where the external moderator has not been present. The Prime Organisation has an expectation that the external moderator would be invited to attend exam boards associated with the programme. The team recommends as **desirable** that the University should re-evaluate the appropriateness of the University of Worcester External Examining Policy and Procedure and amend the external moderation process with regard to the specific requirements for EYPS.

2 The Prime Organisation receives external moderator reports, which are summarised by the EYPS Project Manager and an action plan produced. The external moderation recommendations and action plan are reported to the Head of the Centre for Early Childhood, who feeds the information into the University's quality assurance processes. These include a Partnership Steering Group and the Institute of Education Quality Committee, which is responsible for overall monitoring of actions. This process takes between six and 12 weeks. Action plans ask for completion by the 'next assessment period' rather than a specific date.

3 External moderator reports indicate that some Candidate Review and Development Review reports were unavailable at the time of the moderation taking place. This became an action point at the partnership moderation meeting and an action plan was produced to address the discrepancy. The EYPS Project Manager is responsible for monitoring the action plan within the partner organisations. This is primarily through the dissemination of external moderators' recommendations at the Programme Leader Group meetings and through informal mechanisms such as email. Progress with actions is, however, difficult to determine as programme meeting minutes do not adequately explain when actions have been started or completed. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation develop and implement a monitoring process for ensuring that partners carry out external moderators' recommendations promptly.

4 The Prime Organisation has implemented successful internal moderation processes. These are replicated effectively in delivery partners and are well regarded by them. Delivery partners actively discuss candidates' work during internal moderation and are confident of their understanding of the process. Internal moderation occurs firstly within delivery partners and subsequently at partnership moderation meetings. These moderation opportunities are highly valued by delivery partner programme leaders.

5 Some delivery partners were unclear about external moderators' roles and whether or not moderators could be invited to internal moderation meetings. Delivery partners also felt that they should be supported to fully understand the external moderators' role and where the moderators' work fits into the moderation process, and that external moderators should be invited to partnership moderation meetings where direct feedback on work could be discussed.

6 The assessment process is highly valued by candidates. They are offered the opportunity to feed back their views through the Progress and Development Review and

their end of pathway questionnaire. Candidates felt assured that their opinions are valued by the Prime Organisation. The team identified as a **strength** the feedback opportunities at Progress and Development Reviews.

7 Candidates have confidence that the knowledge and skills they have acquired through undertaking the EYPS programme has improved their practice and broadened future employment opportunities. This is reinforced through the Prime Organisation's destination data, which demonstrates successful employment within the early years sector for the majority of candidates.

8 The assessment process is appropriate for candidates across all pathways and relates to individual training needs. Candidates appreciate the support offered to them in preparing for assessment and are offered feedback regarding the assessment. Candidates also take part in interactive practical sessions provided by the Prime Organisation and these give candidates a sound understanding of how to meet the EYPS standards. The team considers the interactive sessions to be a **strength** of the provision.

9 Over 80 per cent of GPP candidates rate assessor support as 'very good'. Where feedback is less favourable - for example, candidate support related to their ability to demonstrate understanding of the EYPS standards - actions plans are formulated, disseminated and monitored by the EYPS Project Manager. Further monitoring takes place at Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings.

10 A variety of opportunities is available to candidates who are seeking employment, including use of the University of Worcester's careers services and careers services within the delivery partner. In addition, those undertaking academic modules receive specific career guidance through their professional development module. This career guidance, located in the undergraduate module of the degree programme, is a **strength** of the provision.

11 Careers information is also available via delivery partner links on the Prime Organisation's virtual learning environment. However, this support is inconsistent between the pathways, with only the UEP pathway having an appropriate level. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation develop a consistent and accessible approach to careers guidance across all pathways.

12 The team considers that the Prime Organisation meets nearly all the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the management of EYPS candidate outcomes.

2 Approach to quality improvement

13 Quality assurance is well managed at the strategic level through a Partnership Steering Group which meets three times a year. Membership includes the Prime Organisation's Head of the Centre for Early Childhood as chair, the EYPS Project Manager, and senior managers from each delivery partner.

14 Quality assurance at programme and operational levels is managed through Programme Leader Group meetings, held four times a year. The Prime Organisation's EYPS Project Manager and EYPS Programme Leader also attend. Agendas and minutes from both meetings are clear and comprehensive. Additional meetings are held if necessary, for example to address the implementation of the revised EYPS standards.

15 Action planning is a key part of the Prime Organisation and partnership improvement process. This includes an EYPS pathways development plan, action plans

from steering groups and the Programme Leader Group, and the EYPS partnership annual self-evaluation. All plans are clear and comprehensive, have allocated responsibilities, realistic but challenging timescales, and are monitored effectively at relevant meetings and appropriate levels, depending on their potential impact on quality. Further action plans have been produced to address implementation of the revised EYPS standards, and assessment and moderation issues identified by external moderators. The EYPS Project Manager monitors delivery partner action plans and reports progress to the Partnership Steering Group. The team considers the thorough and effective quality assurance and action planning process, which is leading to measurable improvements, to be a **strength** of the provision.

16 There is a wide range of mechanisms to identify and disseminate good practice, principally from strengths identified in annual self-evaluations and in meetings of the Institute of Education Quality Committee. Good practice worthy of dissemination is fed back to delivery partners by email and documents. A recent example was the development of reflective innovation in settings to measure impact on practice research. A number of staff give presentations at conferences and publish academic papers. Good practice is also discussed in Programme Leader Group and Partnership Steering Group meetings. The team considers the wide range of mechanisms used to identify and disseminate good practice to be a **strength** of the provision.

17 A number of training opportunities related to EYPS programmes are available to all staff across the partnership. Outcomes from a Prime Organisation assessor training day have led to an improved process of recording observations in settings as part of the assessment process. The EYPS Assessor Handbook has been amended to reflect the improvement. The team considers the use of assessor training sessions to gain staff feedback and review provision in order to improve the assessment process in settings to be a **strength** of the provision.

18 Other training and development opportunities have included training on EYPS developments for staff and on the assessment process for external moderators. Training is provided for new mentors, and is well-structured, comprehensive and valued highly. Mentors are invited to EYPS updates, steering group meetings and validation panels. New organisations joining the partnership, for example Newman University College in September 2012, are well supported.

19 The EYPS Project Manager attends all Prime Organisation Forums and disseminates information to appropriate groups and delivery partner staff. Contributions have been made to the Forum, for example, by sharing information on recruitment strategies and on supporting candidates into employment. The EYPS Project Manager also attends Teaching Agency training sessions and meetings and disseminates information to appropriate staff.

20 All candidates are able to give feedback on all elements of their programme in annual questionnaires. Response rates are very high. The EYPS Project Manager collates the results. Analysis demonstrates that the partnership meets its internal targets, based on Teaching Agency performance criteria, for candidate satisfaction. Improvement action plans have also been prepared and integrated into quality assurance processes. Candidates following pathways which have academic credit complete module evaluations. Findings from these feed into the quality assurance processes. Necessary actions are carried out by the module leader.

21 Candidates have opportunities to give feedback on their programmes through representation at Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings. They value this opportunity very much. Candidates were able to cite examples of improvements made as a result of their feedback, for example timetable revisions, virtual

learning environment improvements and better reading lists. The team considers that student representation at Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings has resulted in timely improvements to the provision; the team identified this as a **strength** of the provision.

22 Questionnaires have been prepared to gather feedback from placement settings and to allow candidates' employers to feed back on all elements of the EYPS programme. Both questionnaires will be administered from January 2013 after the appropriate pathways have been completed.

23 The team considers that the Prime Organisation meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to quality improvement.

3 Approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children

24 The Prime Organisation utilises the University of Worcester's current safeguarding policy. This policy has been informed by current government guidance and the advice of the local safeguarding board. The Prime Organisation has undertaken a detailed comparison of their delivery partners' policies to ensure consistency and a broadly similar approach to safeguarding.

25 Each delivery partner is aware of the process for reporting concerns, and follows its individual policy in the initial stages of any safeguarding concern. The University of Worcester's registry services coordinate new allocations of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check applications that are required for new candidates. However, the data recording of when CRB enhanced disclosure certificates are received for assessors and mentors is not yet clearly cross-matched to when they undertake EYPS activities in settings. It is also unclear when a CRB certificate has been received in relation to the dates on which candidates begin EYPS placements. This is particularly significant for candidates who are currently employed in settings. In these cases, CRB reference numbers are not recorded by the Prime Organisation, and no written record is available that confirms the candidate employed within a setting holds an enhanced disclosure certificate. Candidates without a current CRB certificate are required to complete a declaration of suitability within the application form; however candidates without current CRB certificates should not be in a setting undertaking any part of the EYPS process. The team recommends as **advisable** that the Prime Organisation effectively implement its safeguarding policy with regard to recording CRB data.

26 Candidates on the Undergraduate Entry Pathway and the Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway study a mandatory safeguarding module. All candidates receive a copy of the candidate handbook, which details how they should respond to safeguarding concerns. For other pathways within the Prime Organisation, the safeguarding is briefly covered as part of the candidates' fourth development training day. This occurs at various points throughout the year, according to the candidate's pathway.

27 One delivery partner, the Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL), uses additional e-learning to ensure candidates receive specific and robust safeguarding training. The use of this e-learning safeguarding module by SCIL, which ensures a consistent and specific approach to safeguarding training, is an example of **good practice**. However, this is not consistent across all pathways, and the Prime Organisation and delivery partners rely on the settings to implement safeguarding training. Local authority training is available, although the process of disseminating this to mentors, assessors or candidates is not clear. It is also not clear how the Prime Organisation keeps records of attendance at local authority safeguarding training.

28 EYPS assessors are employed by the Prime Organisation and are advised about safeguarding concerns in their EYPS Assessor Handbook. This directs assessors to report incidents to the setting in which the incident occurred, which is in turn required to notify the Prime Organisation within three days. Assessors undertake staff development which follows the University of Worcester's staff development programme, and the attendance of the assessor is recorded by the University. The team was unable to establish with any clarity how specific the training is with regard to safeguarding and the safeguarding requirements of EYPS. In addition, a staff development event in October 2012 explained how the changes to the CRB and Independent Safeguarding Authority process impacted the safeguarding process, but this was not a specific safeguarding training event. The team recommends as **advisable** that the Prime Organisation include specific and consistent safeguarding training across all pathways and for assessors.

29 The team considers that the Prime Organisation does not completely meet the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children.

4 Approach to candidate support

30 Candidates are inducted to the programme on day one of their training. This is built upon during a further day where they are encouraged to assess any additional training requirements they might have. Candidates are directed to engage with the support services offered by the Prime Organisation or the delivery partner, some of which are accessible via the virtual learning environment. EYPS candidates are not offered the standard disability screening assessments, although these are available elsewhere in both the Prime Organisation and delivery partners. Candidates who are aware that they require disability support must self-refer to the University of Worcester using the University's processes. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation introduce disability screening during induction for all candidates to ensure individual needs are met.

31 Candidates met by the team consider that support in preparing for their reviews, and post-review feedback to help them prepare for the next stage, is effective. The Prime Organisation is currently developing a new virtual learning environment for all candidates and delivery partners to use as a means of support and communication. Candidates are able to access information systems in each of the delivery partners. In addition, the virtual learning environment allows research sharing, provides a supportive alumnus facility, and facilitates communication between candidates with online discussion boards. The virtual learning environment information is up to date and accurate, and candidates use it effectively to engage with the EYPS course team and each other. Candidates are extremely positive about the information they can access on the virtual learning environment and actively seek opportunities to use the system. The team considers the virtual learning environment, which encourages candidate engagement including good use of discussion boards, to be a **strength** of the provision.

32 EYPS mentors engaged by the Prime Organisation to support candidates are offered training and informative documentation to enable them to reinforce the positive experience of the candidate. In addition, the candidate is encouraged to nominate their own mentor. At the time of the audit, the Prime Organisation was updating its mentoring processes as a result of feedback from candidates, mentors, employers and assessors to ensure that they are fit for purpose. An action plan to facilitate improvements in the process has been produced. The team found that mentors' comments were encouraging and positive with respect to the Prime Organisation communicating effectively with them and offering various training opportunities. Candidates are included in mentor training sessions by

Newman University College. This facilitates good understanding of the role of the mentor by candidates. The team considers this to be an area of **good practice**.

33 Candidates are encouraged to identify their own mentor and are provided with a list of appropriate requirements that their mentor must fulfil, with emphasis on mentors being an existing Early Years Professional where possible. Candidates remarked that mentors are wholly beneficial to the EYPS training process, and that support has been positive and flexible. However, some candidates were unsure as to exactly what the role of their mentor was, and how they were able to support additional learning within the workplace or placement. Where there are challenges with the mentoring process, the Prime Organisation has identified actions which are monitored to completion by the EYPS Project Manager and Head of the Centre for Early Childhood. Mentors record some of their meetings on forms in the mentor handbook. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation implement a transparent process for the development of candidates' understanding of the mentoring process and mentor role within the Prime Organisation.

34 The placement selection process of the University of Worcester is used by the Prime Organisation to support candidates in securing a placement. Candidates are encouraged to select their own placement setting according to their needs for EYPS, and are supported to ensure that the setting meets the requirements of EYPS. Feedback from candidates is acted upon by the Prime Organisation and a placement information pack has been developed for employers and settings.

35 Some candidates commented that they had very little time between accepting their place on the EYPS programme and securing their placement. The Teaching Agency requires the Prime Organisation to ensure that specific and coherent support is available to candidates regarding their placement opportunities, including a list of key dates. These details cannot be found in the candidate handbook. Candidates felt this was due to much of the communication with the Prime Organisation taking place over the summer period when candidates were often out of the country, working or on course-related placements. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation develop a structured approach to providing key placement information to candidates to ensure they are able to source and visit an appropriate placement.

36 The Prime Organisation uses the University of Worcester's Placement Policy to guide the EYPS placement process. This states that placements must be within a 40-mile radius of the University. However, this information is not available in the candidate handbook, and some candidates requesting placements near their home (which was also more than 40 miles from the Prime Organisation) have had difficulties in securing one. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation re-evaluate the appropriateness of the University Placement Policy and amend the procedure regarding location and distance from the University of EYPS placements. The Prime Organisation is developing a questionnaire as a method of gathering further information from settings which act as placement providers.

37 The team considers that the Prime Organisation meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to candidate support.

5 Approach to data management

38 The Prime Organisation's financial and candidate information is held on the University of Worcester's management information system. All information is timely, easily accessible and accurate. Candidate information includes numbers, delivery partner

allocations, recruitment, deferrals, withdrawals, outcomes and candidate profiles. The latter includes diversity data.

39 Management of information is the responsibility of the Academic Unit Manager. An EYPS Programme Administrator carries out day-to-day operation of the system. This includes inputting of the range of candidate data, receipt of invoices, delivery partner payments and dealing with requests for financial information. The Prime Organisation consistently achieves the Teaching Agency's 28-day deadline for payments to delivery partners.

40 Each delivery partner forwards candidate data weekly to the Prime Organisation. This is scrutinised by the Head of the Centre for Early Childhood and Head of the Institute of Education. Recruitment data is monitored weekly by the EYPS Project Manager and reported monthly to the Institute of Education Management Team. Any under-recruitment is investigated with the respective delivery partner. Where over-recruitment occurs, the Prime Organisation seeks alternative programmes for candidates.

41 The EYPS Project Manager and Senior Managers are able to access financial and candidate information at any time. The Institute of Education Management Team receives monthly updates which it uses for strategic and operational planning and management. Delivery partners are able to request data if necessary. The team considers the effective management and access arrangements, which provide timely and accurate information to staff and partners for financial and other aspects of provision, to be a **strength**.

42 The Prime Organisation effectively analyses data for recruitment, withdrawals, deferrals and diversity. It uses findings to monitor levels of recruitment and to encourage applications from minority groups, for example those working in areas of deprivation, black and ethnic minority groups, and men.

43 The partnership uses data in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 1998*, for example in candidate application forms. Confidential information and data is transferred between delivery partners and the Prime Organisation using password-protected documents in emails. The Prime Organisation recognises the need to use a more refined system and has developed a secure portal, operating from December 2012, allowing delivery partners to input data directly.

44 The team considers that the Prime Organisation meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to data management.

6 Approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates

45 Recruitment and selection information is timely, accessible and accurate, and managed within the management information system. The EYPS Project Manager and Head of the Centre for Early Childhood monitor recruitment targets weekly. Targets are also a key focus of Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings.

46 A clear and comprehensive marketing and recruitment strategy - produced jointly by the Prime Organisation's marketing department, EYPS Project Manager and delivery partners - includes a variety of mechanisms to target the recruitment of a range of applicants, including those from areas of deprivation, minority ethnic communities, those with various levels of qualification and experience, men, and a wide range of prospective Early Years Professionals from across the allocated region. The Prime Organisation also works closely with local authorities.

47 Where possible, the Prime Organisation attempts to take candidates currently working in the early years sector at the start of the programme. For those who are unable to find placements, typically entry pathways candidates, the Prime Organisation will accept them onto a programme and provide help in finding a suitable placement. A similar system operates at delivery partners.

48 Although the Prime Organisation has not met its recruitment allocation for the UPP and GEP September intake, it has developed a range of potentially effective strategies to increase applicant numbers. These include discussions with local authorities in delivery partner areas, pathway feeder programmes, varying modes of attendance, top-ups for Early Childhood degrees to support access, targeting job centres, promotion in male-dominated sports, and holding marketing events. Although the Prime Organisation's target for recruitment of males has fallen just short of the nine per cent Teaching Agency target, strategies to increase the number of male applications and subsequent enrolments have been particularly effective. The team considers the effectiveness of the recruitment strategy that encourages male applications and enrolment onto pathways to be a **strength** of the provision.

49 There is an effective procedure to record withdrawals and deferments. Exit interviews are held for leavers. Contact is maintained with those who defer and support offered for potential returners.

50 There is a clear process for the selection of candidates. The use of standard application forms by delivery partners ensures a consistent approach. Applicants provide details of their qualifications, experience, employment, and a supporting statement. Staff use a decision sheet to assess applicants' suitability for their programmes. Information from applications informs the Prime Organisation of how well they are meeting their key performance targets, for example those for ethnicity, sex and areas of deprivation. All suitable applicants are interviewed.

51 Candidates' needs analyses on application forms enable staff to identify skills gaps in relation to experience. Evidence of successful programme choice is supported by good levels of retention and achievement for the January 2012 cohort, which for the GPP was 92 per cent, against the Teaching Agency's target of 85 per cent. A number of students met by the team were unclear about which pathway they were following and why they were on it. The team recommends as **desirable** that the Prime Organisation ensure the application and induction process gives candidates appropriate and clear information about the pathway on which they are enrolled.

52 All candidates undertake an induction to their programme. These differ slightly depending on the pathway. Candidates on UEP and UPP have additional information on the programme's academic content.

53 The team considers that the Prime Organisation meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to recruitment, retention and selection of candidates.

7 Staff management and infrastructure

54 Internal communication processes are clear. Methods include emails, hard copy documents and informal meetings. The Head of the Centre for Early Childhood is responsible for dissemination of relevant and important information to staff, including partnership project managers, programme leaders and appropriate administrative staff. Relevant information is also available to assessors, moderators, mentors, candidates and

settings. Partnership representatives are very complimentary about the Prime Organisation's responsive and effective communication process. The team considers the communication mechanisms between the partners and the Prime Organisation, which contribute to the maintenance of quality, to be a **strength** of the provision.

55 Training facilities, buildings, materials and resources ensure accessibility and are fit for purpose. The Prime Organisation carries out site visits to partners at the start of new agreements. Candidates' satisfaction with the quality of resources, for example library access and content, is high. Flexibility in timetabling allows room booking issues to be effectively addressed should they occur.

56 The Prime Organisation's quality assurance arrangements and management processes ensure that each delivery partner is effectively monitored to ensure they meet their commitments to the partnership agreement. Monitoring processes include scrutiny of annual self-evaluations and action plans, and the use of Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings. In addition, the Prime Organisation visits partners to carry out 'mini' audits, which typically include meetings with students and staff to discuss management of the programmes.

57 Delivery partners are meeting performance management and quality assurance requirements. All delivery partners are subject to the quality assurance and programme module requirements of the Prime Organisation. Discussion with partnership managers and scrutiny of self-evaluations and meeting notes by the team confirms that delivery partners fully understand their responsibilities, as contained in the partnership agreements.

58 The team considers that the Prime Organisation meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to staff management and infrastructure.

Action plan³

University of Worcester action plan relating to the Early Years Professional Status Audit November 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 Prime Organisation:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusion of candidates in mentor training sessions by Newman University College, which facilitates good understanding of the role of the mentor by candidates (paragraph 32) 	<p>Discussions at Programme Leader meetings</p> <p>Programme of mentor training sessions timetabled for all candidates</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>July 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	Integrated sessions for all candidates and mentors across the partnership	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p> <p>Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality)</p>	Candidate feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of an e-learning safeguarding module by the Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning, which ensures a consistent and specific approach to safeguarding training (paragraph 27). 	All candidates will have access to e-learning or external safeguarding training associated with local safeguarding boards throughout the partnership	<p>June 2012</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	Safeguarding training delivered across the partnership in association with Local Authority and Local Safeguarding Boards	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Feedback to Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) to report number on uptake and successful complete of safeguarding training

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.

<p>The audit team identified the following areas of strength within the Prime Organisation:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the career guidance located in the undergraduate module of the degree programme (paragraph 10) 	<p>Prime Organisation to disseminate careers information contained in the Undergraduate Entry Pathway module via the visual learning environment and ensure all candidates are aware of how to access the information</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Candidates on all pathways have the opportunity to access the same level of careers support</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) to review feedback from candidates regarding provision and access to careers information</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the wide range of mechanisms used to identify and disseminate good practice (paragraph 16) 	<p>To collate proposed research activity across team in order to identify research output and dissemination</p>	<p>September 13</p>	<p>Project Manager Programme Leaders EYPS Team Members EYPS Candidates</p>	<p>A minimum of three personnel are currently involved in the partnership are publishing work and presenting at conferences and this will continue to have priority in future development</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Feedback to Steering Group and Programme Leader Group to discuss research completed and dissemination of good practice</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the thorough and effective quality assurance and action planning process, which is leading to measurable improvements (paragraph 15) 	<p>Action planning to be an item on the agenda at Programme Leader Group meeting</p>	<p>March 13</p>	<p>Project Manager</p>	<p>Focused and targeted action planning used across the partnership</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Feedback to Institute Management Team</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of assessor training sessions to gain staff feedback and review provision in order to improve the assessment process in settings (paragraph 17) 	<p>Additional support will be offered through the use of the virtual learning environment to ensure assessor feedback is considered</p> <p>Use of the virtual learning environment by all assessors to review the assessment process</p>	<p>July 13</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>University of Worcester Integrated Learning Services</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Assessment procedures are evaluated to reflect feedback from assessors</p> <p>Programme developments are made in consideration of these</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>EYPS Assessors Feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> candidate representation at Partnership Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings, which has resulted in timely improvements to provision (paragraph 21) 	<p>Candidates invited to attend steering group and Programme Leader Group meetings from across the partnership</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>June 2013</p> <p>July 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Candidates attending Programme Leader Group and Steering Group meetings</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Steering Group and Programme Leader Group minutes reviewed to monitor feedback from candidates</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interactive practical sessions provided by the Prime Organisation that give candidates a sound understanding of how to meet EYPS standards (paragraph 8) 	<p>Discuss use of interactive resources as an agenda item at Programme Leader Group meeting</p> <p>Interactive session resources to be disseminated across the partnership for use by programme leaders and their tutor teams</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Use of interactive session materials across the partnership</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Candidate Feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the virtual learning environment, which encourages candidate engagement including good use of discussion boards (paragraph 31) 	<p>Engage Programme Leaders in online activity</p> <p>Develop engagement of an online community across the partnership to further engage candidates with the virtual learning environment discussions</p>	<p>June 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>100 per cent partnership participation in use of the virtual learning environment</p> <p>70 per cent candidate participation across the partnership</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Feedback to Institute Management Team to review engagement in online community activities</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the feedback opportunities at Progress and Development Reviews (paragraph 6) 	<p>Gather data from candidate feedback regarding EYPS assessments; use findings to support the further develop the programme</p>	<p>Undergraduate Entry Pathways February 2013</p> <p>Undergraduate Practitioner Pathways and Graduate Practitioner Pathways February 2013</p> <p>Graduate Entry Pathways March 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Development of the assessment process taking consideration of candidate feedback</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Data from candidate feedback to be reviewed at Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> information to staff and partners for financial and other aspects of provision (paragraph 41) 	<p>Face to face, email and telephone communication to supported systems and procedures for dealing with financial and other matters</p>	<p>Finance claim Sept Graduate Practitioner Pathways 02.02.13</p> <p>Undergraduate Practitioner Pathways 26.07.13</p> <p>Teaching Agency information disseminated according to dates issued by Teaching Agency</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>EYPS Administrator</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Partners are provided with information in a timely manner</p> <p>Senior managers are updated to support feedback at Institute Management Team monthly meetings</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Head of Institute and Academic Support Unit Manager to monitor communication system operations through gaining feedback at Steering Group and Programme Leader Group meetings</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of the recruitment strategy that encourages male applications and enrolment onto pathways (paragraph 48) 	Targeted advertising used to support recruitment for September 2013	April 2013	Project Manager EYPS Administrator Programme Leaders	9 per cent recruitment of males across the partnership in September 2013	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Self Evaluation Document will review effectiveness of recruitment strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the communication mechanisms between the partners and the Prime Organisation, which contribute to the maintenance of quality (paragraph 54). 	Discuss use of partnership Data Portal at PLG and Steering Group meeting Cross partnership use of a data portal to support the further development of 'data' communication across partnership	March 2013 April 2013	University of Worcester Computer Programmers Project Manager EYPS Administrator Programme Leaders	100 per cent partnership use of data portal provides statistical information across the partnership to support communication and data processing	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Academic Support Unit Manager review of feedback from partners
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"> include specific and consistent safeguarding training across all pathways and for assessors (paragraph 28) 	Safeguarding training for Candidates and assessors to be delivered by a member of the Local Safeguarding	September 2013	Project Manager Programme Leaders	100 per cent of assessors and Candidates to have accessed Safeguarding training	Programme Leaders	Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) to receive feedback to monitor uptake of safeguarding

	Board, Local Authority Safeguarding representative or completion of e-learning module		Local Safeguarding Board			training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively implement the Prime Organisation's safeguarding policy with regard to recording Criminal Records Bureau data (paragraph 25). 	Provide a uniformed approach to recording evidence of candidate, assessor and mentor CRB through the use of a partnership Data Portal	April 2013	Project Manager University of Worcester computer Programmers Partnership Admin Staff Programme Leaders	Candidate CRB clearance information recorded on data portal and a clear reporting process in place	Programme Leaders	Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) to monitor use of Data Portal to ensure required information is recorded appropriately
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it would be desirable for the Prime Organisation to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop and implement a monitoring process for ensuring that partners carry out external moderators' recommendations promptly (paragraph 3) 	Discuss as an agenda item at Programme Leader Group meeting the need for action planning to address comments made by external moderators	March 2013	Project Manager	Partner update reports forwarded to project manager post external moderation feedback to ascertain actions taken by partners in response to external	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) to receive information relating to the effectiveness of the monitoring process and any areas of concern identified

	Introduce monitoring report and procedures to track partner actions in response to feedback from external moderators	March 2013		moderator feedback		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> re-evaluate the appropriateness of the University of Worcester External Examining Policy and Procedure and amend the external moderation process with regard to the specific requirements for EYPS (paragraph 1) 	Liaise with the University of Worcester Academic Quality Unit to revisit the University of Worcester external moderation brief to confirm that there is appropriate differences in expectations of external examiner roles and the role of the EYPS external moderators	May 2013	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p> <p>Head of Institute Quality Committee</p>	<p>External Examiner Policy and Procedure reviewed</p> <p>Required amendments made and implemented</p>	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Head of University of Worcester Academic Quality Unit to approve actions taken and be assured that appropriate procedures are in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a consistent and accessible approach to careers guidance across all pathways (paragraph 11) 	Address candidate needs dependent on pathway and current context Practitioner Pathways will have access to all careers resources via the virtual	May 2013	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	Candidates provided with appropriate careers guidance	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	<p>University Careers advisers review clarity of information provided to candidates</p> <p>Candidate feedback</p>

	learning environment					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a transparent process for the development of the candidates' understanding of the mentoring process and mentor role within the Prime Organisation (paragraph 33) 	<p>Candidates will have the opportunity to attend training session with mentors</p> <p>If unable to attend candidates have access information via the virtual learning environment</p>	<p>June 2013</p> <p>June 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leaders</p>	<p>Candidates have access to mentor training sessions to ensure the mentoring process is fully understood</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Candidate feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> re-evaluate the appropriateness of the University placement policy and amend the procedure regarding location and distance from the University of EYPS placements (paragraph 36) 	<p>Liaise with the Institute of Education Management Team (IMT) and Partnership teams to re-evaluate University of Worcester placement Policy</p>	<p>May 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Head of University of Worcester Academic Quality Unit</p>	<p>Policy reviewed through discussion with IMT Academic Quality Unit and action taken as appropriate to update policy</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) to review amendments made to policy as a result of discussions with IMT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a structured approach to providing key placement information to candidates to ensure they are able to source and visit an appropriate placement (paragraph 35) 	<p>Candidates issued with a course timetable informing them of dates, face-to-face sessions, Development and Progress Review period and assessment period</p>	<p>September 2013</p>	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Programme Leader</p>	<p>Information available to candidates via the virtual learning environment</p>	<p>Head of the Centre for Early Childhood</p>	<p>Candidate feedback</p>

	Information posted on the virtual learning environment Candidate access placement database to gain relevant placement information			Placement database used successfully by candidates		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce disability screening during induction for all candidates to ensure individual needs are met (paragraph 30) 	Liaise with the head of candidate services to review disability screening process for EYPS candidates	May 2013	Project Manager Programme Leader Head of candidate services	Agreed disability screening procedure is in place	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Associate Head of Institute (Head of Quality) and Assistant Head of Registry approval of actions taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the application and induction process gives candidates appropriate and clear information about the pathway on which they are enrolled (paragraph 51). 	Candidate informed of this in their letter of acceptance Information reinforced during the induction process	September 2013 September 2013	Project Manager Programme Leader	Candidates are fully aware of the pathway being followed	Head of the Centre for Early Childhood	Candidate feedback

Annex 1: Candidate statistics

January 2012 intake

	University of Worcester	University of Gloucestershire	Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning	University College Plymouth St Mark and St John	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	15	9	16	0	40	100%
UPP	15	17	15	15	62	83%
GEP	0	8	9	0	17	85%
UEP	20	0	0	15	35	100%
Total	50	34	40	30	154	91%

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	6	15%	2	5%	0	0%
UPP	19	31%	4	6%	2	3%
GEP	N/A	N/A	2	12%	0	0%
UEP	N/A	N/A	0	0	7	20%
Total	25		8	5%	9	6%

Retention and success - January 2012 intake

	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Deferred	Completed or due to complete	% retained	Assessed	Successful completion	% success
GPP	43	8	0	35	81	35	35	100%
UPP	62	5	3	57	92	N/A	N/A	N/A
GEP	17	0	0	17	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
UEP	35	2	0	33	94	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	157	15	3	142	92	35	35	100%

September 2012 intake

	University of Worcester	Newman University College	University of Gloucestershire	Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning	University College Plymouth St Mark and St John	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	24	8	12	16	10	70	90%
UPP	14	1	23	26	13	77	69%
GEP	13	0	6	16	18	53	79%
UEP	18	0	13	14	0	45	100%
Total	69	9	54	72	41	245	81%

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - September 2012 intake

	Candidates from deprived areas	% of cohort	Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates	% of cohort	Men into Childcare	% of cohort
GPP	24	34%	5	7%	1	1%
UPP	24	31%	3	4%	3	4%
GEP	N/A	N/A	7	13%	4	8%
UEP	N/A	N/A	0	0%	1	2%
Total	48		15	6%	9	4%

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 deliver 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 contractor 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 who 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.

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