Bedfordian Business School

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

October 2013

Key findings about Bedfordian Business School

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in October 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of Pearson, Educational Development International and the University of Maribor, Slovenia.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of these awarding organisations.

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

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

- the provision of an effective Essential Study Skills module (paragraph 2.4)
- the consistent and responsive use of student feedback enhances the quality of teaching (paragraph 2.6)
- the well equipped and resourced learning environment (paragraph 2.15).

Recommendations

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

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

- embed all quality assurance roles, responsibilities and processes (paragraph 1.3)
- clarify the nature and extent of assessment support and moderation that will be provided by the University of Maribor (paragraph 1.4)
- develop centre-designed programme specifications for all the BTEC provision in line with new awarding organisation guidance (paragraph 2.1)
- put in place arrangements to regularly revise and update information (paragraph 3.3)
- develop and implement a system of version control for all documentation to avoid overlapping guidance (paragraph 3.4).

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

- engage consistently with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to further assure management of academic standards and quality (paragraph 1.7)
- include detailed and measurable action plans in departmental reports (paragraph 2.3)
- revise the BTEC assessment guidance and make regular updates available to all staff (paragraph 2.8)
- update the Quality Assurance Manual to reflect all revised policies and procedures (paragraph 3.5).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the Bedfordian Business School (the School). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Pearson BTEC, Educational Development International and the University of Maribor, Slovenia. The review was carried out by Mr Gary Hargreaves and Ms Ann Kettle (reviewers) and Mrs Mandy Hobart (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *[Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#)*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included the self-evaluation document, external reports from awarding organisations and from the British Accreditation Council (BAC), policy documents and minutes and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the Qualifications and Credit framework
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- information supplied to the provider by its awarding organisations.

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

The Bedfordian Business School was established in 2010 and is based on a single campus close to Luton station and town centre. The School currently offers programmes accredited by two UK national awarding organisations and one European University. The School's mission statement is to 'be a leading independent higher education institution of excellence delivering quality education in partnership with external bodies by providing a learning environment conducive to excellence, which ultimately brings success to students'.
The School aims to support students to gain management and professional qualifications to meet likely local and overseas demands, and to support career development opportunities. The School has well-kept facilities including six classrooms, two computer laboratories and a student common room. The School owns the building and all facilities.

At the time of the review visit the School had been through a difficult transition period having had its application for highly trusted sponsor status refused by the UK Border Agency in September 2012 and its Tier 4 license re-instated in August 2013. The School made arrangements to ensure 22 of its higher education students were able to transfer to another private provider, while two home students completed their level 7 programme in July 2013. However, at the time of the review visit only one programme, the Extended Diploma in Strategic Leadership and Management, had recruited students, with teaching scheduled to start in mid-October 2013. No students were available to meet the Coordinator during the preparatory visit, but the team were able to meet two students during the review visit.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations:

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

Education Development International
- Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (level 4)
- Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (level 4)

Pearson BTEC
- Extended Diploma in Strategic Leadership and Management (level 7)
- Higher National Certificate in Business (level 4)
- Higher National Diploma in Business (level 5)
- Higher National Certificate in Computing and Systems Development (level 4)
- Higher National Diploma in Computing and Systems Development (level 5)

University of Maribor
- Master of Business Administration (MBA) Corporate Governance and Management (0)
- Integrated PhD Research Skills, Techniques and Methods Education (0)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The School does not have awarding powers for any of the qualifications it offers. The overarching responsibility for the checking and maintenance of academic standards lies with the awarding organisations. The School has responsibility for setting and marking assignments for the Pearson BTEC higher nationals and level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership. The University of Maribor sets and marks all assessments and also contributes to some delivery of teaching and the production of materials.

Recent developments

The School has gained accreditation to offer Pearson BTEC programmes in business, computing, health and social care, and travel and tourism, and no longer offers provision accredited by the Association of Business Practitioners, the London Centre of Marketing and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. Plans are now in place to recruit students to business and computing programmes in the next few months as well as to the University of Maribor MBA provision.

Students' contribution to the review

At the time of the visit the School had no students enrolled as a result of the loss of the Tier 4 license. Consequently no current student submission was available to the team though evidence of a previous submission formed part of the evidence presented. The team met two students during the review visit.

Detailed findings about Bedfordian Business School

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The School has not yet fully embedded its management structure. The School's Strategic Plan, which was in the process of being implemented at the time of the previous review in March 2012, was curtailed following the loss of the School's highly trusted sponsor status in September 2012. The posts of Quality Assurance Manager, Registrar, Librarian/IT Manager and Student Welfare Officer remain vacant. While the School is notionally organised into six departments, only two, English and Business, are as yet functioning. The Director of Studies is responsible for most aspects of curriculum management including teaching, learning and assessment, and reports to the Principal. Heads of department deal with the daily management of programmes but there are currently no formal programme teams due to the small numbers of staff and students.

1.2   The School has a clear committee structure, but with the withdrawal of the Tier 4 license, there has been limited opportunity for implementation of the procedures for management of academic standards. The committee structure includes an executive body, which meets regularly to deal with operational matters, such as preparations for external reviews and responses to external challenges. A Strategic Planning Committee sets long-term goals and periodically reviews the Strategic Plan in the light of external factors and financial constraints. The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for the monitoring of academic standards and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities. Due to only one programme being delivered, its work has been limited in 2013.

1.3   The School's Quality Assurance Committee includes an external consultant who plays an important role in producing critical and evaluative reports based on quarterly visits. The reports inform planning and review priorities, including progress on the action plan drawn up following the 2012 review visit. The School claims that it actively evaluates the delivery and quality of programmes on 'a continuous basis' and has developed procedures to support the management of academic standards. However, as very few classes have been run due to the loss of the Tier 4 license, many systems have yet to be implemented. The Business and English departments are the only areas to have delivered provision and produced annual reports over the last two years. As student numbers increase, it is **advisable** for the School to embed all quality assurance roles, responsibilities and processes across all its provision.

1.4   In 2012 the School took the strategic decision to focusing its higher education provision on Pearson BTEC qualifications and a two-year MBA (Corporate Governance and Management) awarded by the University of Maribor in Slovenia. The July 2012 Memorandum of Agreement does not clearly document respective responsibilities for the management of academic standards. Further, the role of the University in the overall monitoring of academic standards is not clearly specified. As yet, the School does not appear to have developed an assessment strategy for the MBA, and is not clear to what extent this is to be set by the University, though documentation indicates the University will undertake some second marking and moderation of assessments. It is **advisable** for the School to clarify the nature and extent of assessment support and moderation that will be provided by the University of Maribor.

1.5   It was noted in the 2012 REO report that the School had not yet developed an assessment strategy and that a more structured approach to assessment was needed to assure academic standards. The School has developed an assessment strategy for the

Pearson BTEC programmes with assessment criteria aligned with the awarding organisation's requirements.

How effectively does the School make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.6   The 2012 REO report recommends that the School should implement fully all recommendations from external bodies and monitor the effectiveness of actions. The team identified limited evidence of use of external reports and reference points to support the management of academic standards. The School has responded to the BTEC standards verifier report recommendations and is planning to purchase anti-plagiarism software and to continue to monitor the quality of formative feedback. A British Accreditation Council Report in 2010 recommended the provision of a disabled toilet and a multi-faith prayer room but delays in the expansion of the School's premises are still preventing the installation of facilities for disabled students. A prayer room was provided during 2012 but removed due to lack of student interest. The team saw no reports following visits from representatives of the University of Maribor during 2012 and 2013.

1.7   The March 2013 REO annual monitoring report found that there had been no direct engagement with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). The School's self-evaluation indicates that academic management and quality procedures meet the expectations of the Quality Code, but the team found limited evidence to support this. The School utilises the level indicators in *The framework for higher education qualification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) to benchmark level 7 assignments and to ensure teaching is at the appropriate level, but there is no formal tracking and monitoring against external standards documentation. Staff are made aware of the Quality Code through guidance on assessment management. It would be **desirable** for the School to engage consistently with the Quality Code to further assure management of academic standards and quality.

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

1.8   The 2012 REO report noted that processes for the internal monitoring of student progression and achievement had yet to be tested. The School has since introduced internal verification of assignments which are approved by the Director of Studies and Principal to ensure that they meet the requirements of the awarding organisations. The August 2013 BTEC First Sampling report found no issues with internal verification or with the grades awarded to the two students completing the level 7 programme.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of its awarding organisations.

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The Principal has overall responsibility for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. Robust internal verification processes and external verification are used on Pearson programmes and account is taken of assessment processes and procedures introduced following critical external reports. All assessments and assignments are verified at the beginning of each semester to ensure they are fit for purpose. The School

has yet to provide centre-designed programme specifications for their Pearson programmes and has not taken account of current guidance from the awarding organisation or the Quality Code. It is **advisable** for the School to develop centre-designed programme specifications for all the BTEC provision in line with new awarding organisation guidance.

2.2   The key responsibilities for the management of the quality of learning opportunities are clearly set out and defined in the terms of reference for the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual and relevant policies. Day-to-day management of learning opportunities at programme level is undertaken by programme managers. The University of Maribor has its own arrangements for monitoring the quality of learning opportunities. The School's oversight, response and alignment to the University's arrangements have yet to be tested.

2.3   Annual departmental reports provide a clear method for identifying strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for the enhancement of learning opportunities. However, not all reports include action plans with clear dates, deadlines or key designated responsibilities. It would be **desirable** for the School to include detailed and measurable action plans in departmental reports to support consistent monitoring of progress against recommendations.

2.4   Annual reports make a positive impact on the student learning experience. Resources are regularly reviewed in the light of student and external verifier feedback and the quality of assessment feedback is monitored. The School has implemented recommendations to enhance student academic skills to include logical, critical and analytical skills and academic writing support at different levels, through the development of a centre-devised Essential Study Skills module. The module is delivered in addition to learning support, and highly valued by students. The provision of an effective Essential Study Skills module which enhances the development of academic and writing skills at different levels is **good practice**.

How effectively does the School make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?

2.5   The use of external reference points is broadly outlined for academic standards in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7. The School has made a start in engaging with the Quality Code, but has yet to apply it directly to the quality assurance policies, handbooks and other quality monitoring documentation.

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

2.6   The School's Teaching and Learning Strategy provides a comprehensive framework and places students at the centre of the learning process. Students confirmed that they are very well supported by staff and that the approach to teaching is focused on meeting student needs within the context of individual learning aspirations. Student views and feedback inform improvements to teaching and learning support, and methods of delivery are varied to reflect student preferences and to help students in meeting learning outcomes. Students perceive this approach as helpful and appropriate. The consistent and responsive use of student feedback which enhances the quality of teaching represents **good practice**.

2.7   Oversight of the quality of teaching and learning is the responsibility of the Director of Studies who, along with the Principal and external consultant, undertakes regular teaching observations. The Director of Studies regularly monitors lectures, schemes of work and teaching observation reports. As part of this monitoring process student feedback is included by means of student satisfaction surveys. Assessment procedures provide students with

clear and timely feedback on initial, formative and summative assessments. Improvements have been implemented following the 2012 review to ensure assessment strategies are aligned with the awarding organisations' requirements, and reflected in the Teaching and Learning Strategy documentation. However, the Teaching and Learning Strategy would benefit from being updated to reflect the changes to awarding organisation guidance, such as the provision of programme specifications as identified in paragraph 2.1.

2.8   The School has produced a Pearson BTEC assessment strategy to support consistency in student assessment. Staff and students report that assessment tasks are clear. Training is provided to ensure that staff are clear on assessment requirements, and a number of staff have undertaken assessment and verification training with Pearson. The School also provides an assessment guide for BTEC programmes which draws on Pearson documents, however, some of the content requires updating. It is **desirable** for the School to revise the BTEC assessment guidance and make regular updates available to all staff.

2.9   The School has rigorous policies and procedures to ensure that only appropriately qualified staff are recruited. Teaching responsibilities are clearly outlined in job descriptions and also covered in the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

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

2.10   Students receive clear information about their learning programmes, including a comprehensive induction and a welcome pack, most of which is made available through the virtual learning environment. Following a recommendation from the 2012 review, students are provided with course handbooks outlining the programme aims and learning outcomes, and an assessment calendar. Students have access to relevant programme information both through the virtual learning environment and in hard copy, although examples made available to the team were mostly for the previous academic year and require updating. At programme level student views are expressed through surveys, which are summarised in departmental reports, and a student feedback report, which is received by the Quality Assurance Committee.

2.11   All students are provided with a personal tutor whose role is both academic and pastoral and who provides timely, effective and informative guidance that includes career progression and confidential and supportive counselling. Personal tutors can also make arrangements for free access to a range of study support skills including basic IT and research skills.

How effectively does the School develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?

2.12   The small number of students and the loss of the Tier 4 license has affected the implementation of the staff development policy. With reduced staffing levels and programme delivery, few events have been run in-house, though staff have attended external events as part of their own professional updating. Processes for monitoring staff development are set out in the staff development policy and are also reflected in the staff appraisal system. Staff development activities are recorded in staff records. However, the team found it difficult to judge the effectiveness of staff development activities based on the delivery of a single programme.

2.13   An induction programme is provided for all new staff along with probation reviews and appraisal. The small number of current staff means that there is good and regular communication between staff and with students, though procedures are largely informal and somewhat ad hoc.

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

2.14   The Resource Strategy is embedded in the School's Strategic Plan. The School has a well-stocked library and is planning to invest in more online and electronic resources. Although significant work has been completed in providing a range of IT resources, management information systems, library data, and biometric attendance devices, the small number of students in the last year has meant that planned investments have been postponed.

2.15   The School owns a large well-appointed building with capacity for expansion on the ground floor, should student numbers grow. The School has well equipped classrooms, libraries and a student common room along with good access to computers. Students are very positive about the School's facilities, access to online resources and the well stocked libraries that meet all their reading and research requirements. The virtual learning environment is also a useful source of information and programme materials which students appreciate being able to access both on and off site. The well-equipped and resourced learning environment, which supports students to achieve their learning outcomes, is **good practice**.

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

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3   Information about learning opportunities

How effectively does the School communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1   The School's website and the prospectus are the main vehicles used for communicating with prospective students and other stakeholders. However, information available to prospective students and other stakeholders is not always accurate or up to date. At the start of the review visit the website included provision no longer offered, such as accountancy and management programmes. A website update took place during the review visit, and the information changed to reflect the current programme offer. However, the prospectus remains to be updated. Broader website updates have not been evidenced since the annual monitoring visit in March this year. While students indicated that they found the application and admissions information helpful, no handbooks or course information other than course descriptors are available on the website.

3.2   The School does not currently use agents to recruit students but has its own office in Pakistan, and an in-house marketing team. There is very limited use of social media, and information on the site was out of date. The School is dependent on its website and electronic prospectus to communicate information about its learning opportunities, and entry and visa requirements. The loss of the IT Manager has significantly affected the School's capacity to ensure regular updates are being made.

How effective are the School's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.3   The School is responsible for a range of handbooks which provide information about both the programmes and the institution. The Student Handbook is well laid out and

provides useful information about the facilities and about living in Luton. Programme handbooks contain information about module content, including time-management and the need for clear and accurate referencing. Handbooks do not have a uniform layout, in part as a result of the information provided by the awarding organisations. All contain information about modules, learning outcomes, and assessment strategies, and some provide clear information about grading criteria. It is not made clear in the University of Maribor MBA information leaflet, for example, that the programme is part-time and that research for the dissertation should normally be carried out in the candidate's place of work. Other handbooks have not been updated. Additionally, no programme specifications are included for Pearson programmes, and academic calendars are from last year. It is **advisable** for the School to put in place arrangements to regularly revise and update information, and to ensure it is accurate, complete and clear to all stakeholders.

3.4   In addition to the current Strategic Plan, the School has developed, with the help of its external quality consultant, a considerable number of strategies and policies. Following the 2012 review visit and recommendation that all quality assurance processes and responsibilities should be fully implemented, it was agreed that all School documents should be standardised and regularly reviewed. However, considerable overlap was found between policies. Further, the School does not have a mechanism for identifying when revisions have taken place. It is **advisable** for the School to develop and implement a system of version control for all documentation to avoid overlapping guidance.

3.5   The majority of policies and procedures to support the monitoring of quality of teaching are set out in the School Quality Assurance Manual, as well as in other policy documentation and guidance. This repetition and overlap of procedures between documents makes their interpretation unclear on occasion. The School is aware of the lack of clarity and is working to rectify the problem. It would be **desirable** for the School to update the Quality Assurance Manual to reflect all revised policies and procedures.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Action plan[3]

Bedfordian Business School action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of October 2013						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the School:						
• the provision of an effective Essential Study Skills module (paragraph 2.4)	Further improving the Essential Study Skills module	Review course contents to Make necessary adjustments in topics based on: • past student performance and feedback • industry trends • optimal combination of resources and short and medium term strategic goals	By March 2014 and then annually reviewed	Director of studies	Principal	External examiner's report and assessments of students' course work Consider staff and student feedback on the module
• the consistent and responsive use of student feedback	Making student feedback more effective and more frequent	In addition to end of module/semester feedback and incorporate mid-term feedback	During and by the end of each module and semester	Heads of department and module tutors	Director of Studies	Feedback reports and summaries presented to Quality

[3] The School 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 School's awarding organisations.

enhances the quality of teaching (paragraph 2.6)		opportunities Capture informal feedback	Academic cycle			Assurance Committee and the School's Staff Student Liaison Committee
• the well equipped and resourced learning environment (paragraph 2.15).	Enhancing virtual learning environment's quality of learning and enabling it to adapt to changing needs of learners	Allocate a resource dedicated to the virtual learning environment and its functioning to ensure it serves the intended purpose effectively	June 2014 and then annually reviewed	Principal/ Registrar	Principal/ Registrar	The extent to which eCampus/virtual learning environments are being used via access data
Advisable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date(s)**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the School to:						
• embed all quality assurance roles, responsibilities and processes (paragraph 1.3)	Improving compliance with the standards of third party educational providers/awarding organisations	Appointment of a Quality Nominee for HND, BTEC Pearson courses and university validated provision	June 2014 and then annually reviewed	Principal	Quality Assurance Committee	External Quality Advisor/Verifier reports
• clarify the nature and extent of assessment support and moderation that will be provided by the University	Negotiating and comprehensively documenting the proposed coordination between the School and the University of Maribor in academic	Sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the School and the University of Maribor for Master of Business Administration/level 8 programmes detailing:	March 2014 and then annually reviewed	Principal	Quality Assurance Committee	Assessment support and moderation documents reflecting the University of Maribor's

of Maribor (paragraph 1.4)	collaboration	• course contents • intake and delivery schedule • assessment methods • quality assurance procedures • resource allocations plan • fees • disciplinary procedures and responsibilities • student feedback mechanisms annual monitoring process				documents
• develop centre-designed programme specifications for all the BTEC provision in line with new awarding organisation guidance (paragraph 2.1)	Develop a template for BTEC Programme specifications, and new HNC and HND specifications using the Pearson and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) external reference points Updating learning resources related to awarding bodies' modules where necessary	Attend Pearson training courses Revise handbooks and include new programmes specifications for all BTEC programmes, Higher National programmes and for the Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership level 7	March 2014 and then annually reviewed	Director of Studies heads of department	Principal Quality Assurance Committee	Feedback from teaching staff and students on improved versions of handbooks inclusive external quality advisor reports, standards verifier reports and QAA annual monitoring visit and report
• put in place	Improving the availability, accuracy and reliability of	Assign responsibility to senior manager to review	March 2014 and quarterly	Principal	Quality Assurance	Audit by the External

arrangements to regularly revise and update information (paragraph 3.3)	public information	any changes in practices, policies, procedures, legal circumstances and other business transactions which could trigger updating the information on public portals Develop a mechanism to regularly revise and update website, handbooks and prospectus	and annually reviewed		Committee	Quality Assurance Consultant and feedback from teachers and students
• develop and implement a system of version control for all documentation to avoid overlapping guidance (paragraph 3.4).	Implementing a document version control system that fulfils basic requirement and is cost effective Fully developed and implemented a system of document version control	Consider SVN Consider GitHub Consider McLaren FusionLive ☺	June 2014 and then annually reviewed	Principal	Quality Assurance Committee	Central repository of documents and authorised and limited access for document modification Review by auditor
Desirable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date/s**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the School to:						
• engage consistently with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to	The framework for the management of academic standards is fully aligned with the Quality Code	Developing understanding and inclusion of the Quality Code into revised policies and procedures through	March 2014 and then annually reviewed	Principal, Director of Studies	Principal Quality Assurance Committee	Successful implementation and monitoring of the Quality Code evidenced

further assure management of academic standards and quality (paragraph 1.7)	Linking sections in the Quality Assurance manual where appropriate to the Quality Code	development activities				through improved staff and student feedback, comments from external quality assurance consultants, internal and external verifiers and general enhancement of the student learning experience presented to the Academic Board
• include detailed and measurable action plans in departmental reports (paragraph 2.3)	Standardisation in producing departmental reports inclusive targets, action plans and evaluation	Develop template or report layout for departmental reports inclusion of targets, action plans and measurable/evaluation	December 2014 and then annually reviewed	Director of Studies and heads of department	Principal and Director of Studies	Quality Assurance Committee meeting reports, external quality advisor reports and comments
• revise the BTEC assessment guidance and make regular updates available to all staff (paragraph 2.8)	Review of present BTEC assessment guidance to identify improvement areas and further improvement and update, accessible to all teaching staff	Information sharing with all academic staff on BTEC assessment guidance and improvements identified and academic staff training on writing assignment briefs and assessment (marking of assignments)	June 2014 and then annually reviewed	Director of Studies and heads of department	Principal and Director of Studies	Reports from external quality consultant, external examiners and departmental reports and feedback from students

update the Quality Assurance Manual to reflect all revised policies and procedures (paragraph 3.5).	Review , revise and update Quality Assurance Manual	Incorporate the Quality Code, awarding bodies' requirements and update the Quality Assurance Manual meeting all the requirements of the stakeholders	September 2014 then annually reviewed	Registrar	Principal	External quality advisor reports and QAA's annual monitoring visit and report

About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the
Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook.[4]

academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education
providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and
succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their
courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold
academic standards**.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to
award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher
Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act
1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA
(in response to applications for taught degree-awarding powers, research degree-awarding
powers or university title).

awarding organisation An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification;
an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to
perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for
the purpose of providing educational oversight.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements
respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the
quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a
technical term in QAA's review processes.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on
student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at
approaches to assessment.

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*.

good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a
particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic
standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's
review processes.

highly trusted sponsor An organisation that the UK Government trusts to admit migrant
students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

learning outcomes What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

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

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

programme specifications Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes** of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

provider (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-**awarding bodies** or **awarding organisations**. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent School.

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

quality See **academic quality**.

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

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

subject benchmark statement A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

threshold academic standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.