



Stanfords College of UK Ltd

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

December 2013

Key findings about Stanfords College of UK Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in December 2013, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (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; ATHE (The Management Awarding Organisation); BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT; and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management.

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 rigorous use of diagnostic testing of applicants (paragraph 1.4)
- the effective monitoring of attendance in supporting students' performance (paragraph 1.5)
- the use of a 'critical friend' in peer observation (paragraph 2.4)
- the high quality and effective pastoral support (paragraph 2.6).

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:

- formalise the mechanisms for staff to share pastoral and academic support interventions (paragraph 2.7)
- improve the use and detail of written feedback on student work (paragraph 2.8)
- implement formal and regular checking of website content and functionality (paragraph 3.4).

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

- reference and synchronise all policies and procedures to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraphs 1.8 and 2.2)
- engage students in the use of feedback to improve their future performance (paragraph 2.9)
- evaluate the impact of staff development on improving the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 2.13)
- roll out and align the content of one virtual learning environment across both campuses (paragraphs 2.16 and 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Stanfords College of UK Ltd (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. 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; ATHE (The Management Awarding Organisation); BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT (BCS); and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management (OTHM). The review was carried out by Mrs Sue Miller, Mr Colin Smith (reviewers) and Mr Michael Ridout (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 Quality Assurance Policy, handbooks, partnership agreements, accreditations, policies and procedures, the programme documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding organisations. Evidence was also gathered from meetings with staff and students, and from the scrutiny of samples of student work.

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

- awarding organisations' requirements
- the Accreditation Service for International Colleges
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

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

The College was established as Stanfords School of English in early 2000 and in June 2006, the School was re-registered as Stanfords College of UK Ltd. It has its centre of operations at the main campus which is located on London Road, Norbury, south London. There is also a building being used for teaching in Norbury and a newly established campus in Birmingham. In March 2009 the College gained accreditation from the Accreditation Service for International Schools (ASIC). The College was granted Tier 4 status by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) in 2009 and approved as a highly trusted sponsor in October 2012. In November 2012, the Independent School Inspectorate approved the College for educational oversight. The College achieved Investors in People accreditation in April 2013.

The College's mission is 'to provide access to quality education that is affordable and that enables learners to develop knowledge and skills necessary for today's sophisticated workplace; as well as prepare them for leadership of the community'. There are 259 students enrolled on level 4 to level 7 courses in the areas of business and management, information technology, healthcare management, and tourism and hospitality management.

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

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight

² www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

Pearson

- BTEC Level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (13)
- BTEC Level 5 HND Diploma (15)

ATHE, The Management Awarding Organisation

- Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management (14)
- Level 5 Extended Diploma in Management (40)
- Level 6 Diploma in Management (128)
- Level 7 Diploma in Healthcare Management (34)

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

- Level 5 Diploma in Information Technology (12)

The Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management

- Level 6 Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (2)
- Level 7 Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (1)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The four awarding organisations (Pearson, ATHE, BCS, and OTHM) determine the intended learning outcomes, indicative content and assessment guidelines for each programme. The College is responsible for learning, teaching and managing the quality and delivery of the programmes in accordance with the regulations of its awarding organisations. The College provides formative assessment to students, although the level of involvement and responsibility for summative and external assessment is determined by the individual awarding organisation. The College is also approved to offer courses on behalf of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and the Education for Business Managers and Administrators, although there are currently no students enrolled on these courses.

Recent developments

The College moved its Hounslow campus to Birmingham by entering into an agreement to take over the premises occupied by the Birmingham Management Training College and establish a new campus at this location. The College has been operating from this location since September 2013. The College has taken the opportunity to align the systems used at Birmingham and Norbury, drawing on best practice at each campus. An interim quality manager has been appointed with a view to a permanent appointment taking up their duties in January 2014. The College has developed a progression pathway through an agreement with the London School of Marketing to act as a local access point for online courses accredited by Anglia Ruskin University.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The students submitted a written submission that was prepared by the Stanfords College Student Representative and the student group representatives. Information for the submission was obtained by a combination of student feedback questionnaires, general student feedback and one-to-one feedback through group representatives. Students involved in the preparation of the submission were present at the preparatory meeting and met the team during the review. The review team found the students to be very enthusiastic and their contribution was both informative and helpful.

Detailed findings about Stanfords College of UK Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College's arrangements for managing academic standards provide adequate oversight for the programmes being offered. The development of a new campus in Birmingham and the partnership with Birmingham Management Training College has resulted in the two management systems being integrated with best practice being identified and adopted.

1.2 Accreditation is in place with Pearson, ATHE, BCS and OTHM. Following the closure of the Institute of Administrative Management, arrangements were made to transfer students to comparable programmes with ATHE and to ensure that recognition of prior learning is undertaken to facilitate progression.

1.3 The College clearly understands its responsibilities for the management of the programmes offered. For all courses the College is responsible for the recruitment of students, provision of resources, pastoral care and the delivery of programmes to prepare students for assessment. With the exception of BCS, the College is also responsible for the assessment of students which includes the writing and marking of assignments in accordance with the assessment criteria provided by the relevant awarding organisation.

1.4 The Senior Management Team provides clear leadership and direction to maintain and enhance provision. The roles and responsibilities of individuals and of the committees are clearly defined. An effective committee structure is used to monitor and manage standards. Termly scrutiny of courses is facilitated through the provision of departmental reports to the academic based committees. The Admission Committee has instituted tight control over admissions. This ensures that prospective students have not only the academic background required by the awarding organisations and UKBA but also, by using a robust series of diagnostic tests, the aptitude for independent learning and the necessary key skills. The rigorous use of diagnostic testing of applicants is **good practice**.

1.5 Student attendance and the standards of assignments submitted are closely monitored to support progression. The introduction of a biometric attendance monitoring system has helped to improve attendance rates. These changes and the increased and targeted support offered to complement the diagnostic assessments have raised success rates. The effective monitoring of attendance in supporting students' performance is **good practice**. The recruitment of enthusiastic, dedicated, well qualified lecturing staff and the opportunities and support provided for their professional development ensures standards of delivery.

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

1.6 The College has chosen to engage with awarding organisations whose programmes have been benchmarked against the Qualifications and Credit Framework. These organisations ensure that programme specifications and assessment tools are appropriate to the levels and standards expected, and are aligned with the occupational standards. Accreditation and quality assurance visits are made by the awarding organisations that confirm the College's suitability for continued accreditation.

1.7 The College has made good use of the report it received from the Independent Schools Inspectorate following their review in 2012. Recommendations were action planned and have been implemented and evaluated. The College ensures that the admissions and attendance requirements of UKBA are understood and implemented, and it closely monitors all information concerning international students and any changes included are entered into the College's systems to maintain compliance.

1.8 Staff are aware of the Quality Code, although there is currently limited reference and use of the Quality Code within the College's policies and procedures. The updating and synchronising of the College's management and quality assurance systems across both campuses provides an opportunity to reference policies and procedures against the Expectations and Indicators within the Chapters of the Quality Code. It would be **desirable** for the College to reference and synchronise all policies and procedures to the Quality Code.

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

1.9 The College works closely with its awarding organisations to facilitate and make best use of external oversight to assure academic standards. The awarding organisations are responsible for the appointment of external examiners, moderators and verifiers and arrangements vary for their involvement. With the exception of the externally examined BCS courses, the College has varying responsibility for the setting and first marking verification, moderation and standardisation of the assignments which contribute to the summative assessment of the qualifications offered. The College has a rigorous pre and post-internal verification process in place, which considers all internally set assignments. Moderation and standardisation is carried out between cohorts based on the different campuses before work is made available to the awarding organisations. External verifier reports confirm that standards are appropriate. Reports are considered by the Academic Committee and any recommendations action planned and implemented.

1.10 The College evaluates the effectiveness of its systems through the regular course review reports submitted to the Academic Committee. These reflect on the key performance indicators of attendance, submission of assignments and grade profiles. Targets for these are high and when they are not achieved interventions are action planned, implemented and monitored. The College benchmarks its performance against published results for other providers. Identified good practice is effectively shared through the regular meetings of the Standardisation Committee and the Academic Committee and the close working relationships between staff at all levels.

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.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 Learning opportunities are managed appropriately in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the awarding organisations, as described in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3. The Executive Management Board satisfactorily oversees and monitors developments and aligns quality on both campuses. The quality assurance cycle involves the continuous review of teaching, learning and assessment. This approach effectively addresses the College's academic quality assurance objectives.

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

2.2 External reference points are used within course delivery to meet the needs of the awarding organisations, as stated in paragraph 1.6. Programme specifications are provided by the awarding organisations and made available on the College website. The use of the Quality Code in producing policies for teaching, learning and assessment for students is not, as yet, fully embedded.

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

2.3 The College effectively maintains oversight of teaching and learning by the use of teaching observations, the continuous mentoring and monitoring system and engaging external consultants. The continuous mentoring and monitoring system provides a framework to keep all programmes updated and maintain the quality of teaching and learning. Staff at both campuses understand the quality assurance processes, and best practice from each campus is being adopted across the College. The College follows an appropriate course approval policy process. The Executive Management Board makes use of two external quality assurance consultants who scrutinise, review and recommend improvements to the course provision and quality.

2.4 The quality of teaching and learning is assured through peer observations, written student feedback on teaching and modules, drop in 'critical friend' observations and the formal annual teaching observations. Staff noted that peer observation has effectively led to improvements in teaching and learning. The use of a 'critical friend' to help with identifying and supporting good practice and recommending areas for development is particularly valued by teaching staff. Observers of teaching practice have adequate preparation and the appropriate skills to undertake observation to provide constructive feedback and support. The use of a 'critical friend' in peer observation is **good practice**.

2.5 The College has a robust approach to staff recruitment, appointing qualified and experienced academics who maintain active research and access continuing professional development networks. New appointments undertake a probation period and are supported in developing their delivery skills.

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

2.6 Pastoral support exceeds students' expectations. Students spoke highly of the small teaching groups and interaction with staff. Staff provide highly effective support and direction in accordance with students' requirements and the College's open door policy. Suitable

approaches to ensure consistent and coordinated student recruitment practices are in place. There is effective promotion of integration of students through a range of extra-curricular activities. For example, students from Birmingham and London meet up on College devised activities which enable students to develop a better cultural understanding of the UK and each other. Students are encouraged to join nearby leisure activities. Policies are in place to challenge bullying and harassment. The high quality and effective pastoral support is **good practice**.

2.7 The College provides a comprehensive induction programme which includes the completion of a checklist and training needs analysis that is held in the student's departmental file. Students are supported through a tutorial system. Entitlement to personal one-to-one support for modules is indicated in the module specification and communicated to students in course handbooks. Unlimited access to tutorial sessions for personal advice and guidance on a range of matters is provided. Records of academic or pastoral support are kept manually and there is no formal system of sharing among staff the support provided to students. It is **advisable** for the College to formalise the mechanisms for staff to share pastoral and academic support interventions.

2.8 Detailed oral feedback from regular assessments allows students to develop their understanding and make progress. This was not, however, evident in the written feedback provided to students. It is **advisable** for the College to improve the use and detail of written feedback on student work.

2.9 Students indicated that they were able to obtain formative feedback on coursework drafts and that work was returned promptly within three weeks. Students understood the marking boundaries and they welcomed feedback on their work to inform them of how to progress. Evidence of students using feedback in future assignments is limited. It would be **desirable** for the College to engage students in the use of feedback to improve their future performance.

2.10 The College evaluates the support provided by extensive use of the student voice and other feedback mechanisms. Student representatives attend the Senior Management Committee, Quality Assurance Committee and Complaint and Appeal Committee meetings. Students confirmed that their views are valued and issues are addressed appropriately.

2.11 The team saw developing practice using the website and virtual learning environments (VLE) to extend student access across the College. The intent to extend this development to all students who had not had previous opportunity to access a VLE, and rely on email contact will provide significant benefit.

2.12 The depth of understanding by the College management of overseas employment markets ensures students are given appropriate guidance about progression to higher education or employment at induction and during their course of study, enabling them to make informed choices. The use and delivery of case studies is concurrent and appropriate to future needs. In addition, examples of work placements within the student's home country are used for reflective practice.

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

2.13 The College uses a range of staff development activities effectively to enhance teaching and learning. All staff participate in staff appraisal and undertake a training needs analysis. Classroom delivery practice is a particular feature of staff development and is monitored by the Quality Assurance Committee. The highly motivated academic staff team

consistently use peer group mentoring and share best practice that is adopted across the College. Other continuing professional development activity includes active research, scholarly activity and attendance at both in-house and external events. There is, however, no formal process in place to draw together and review the impact of staff development on policies and strategies. It would be **desirable** for the College to evaluate the impact of staff development on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

2.14 New employee orientation is comprehensive and conducted by the relevant departmental line manager, and includes an overview of the College, an explanation of the core values, vision, mission, and goals and objectives. The induction process is not, however, clearly defined within the Staff Handbook. The College undertakes a planned teaching observation during induction and effectively monitors progress of new staff over their 90-day probationary period.

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

2.15 Students and awarding bodies confirm learning resources, across both campuses, are adequate for the provision, readily available and accessible. Resources, including online assessment tools, libraries, computers and wireless access, are used adequately in supporting teaching and learning.

2.16 Three independent VLEs are being used (paragraph 3.3). This is limiting opportunities to share learning resources and materials across the campuses, within courses and the support of independent learning outside of the classroom. It would be **desirable** for the College to roll out and align the content of one VLE across both campuses.

2.17 Regular student meetings are held to discuss current issues and possible areas for improvement. This has led to changes in accommodation, facilities and resources and this was acknowledged by students.

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

3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 Students confirm that the information they receive at each stage of their learning journey is useful and accurate. The College publishes information on its courses, admissions requirements and procedures for prospective students, a wide range of more detailed course and assessment information and general information on living and studying in the UK for students, procedures and policies for staff and other stakeholders, and information on students' success for the public. The College uses a range of media for this; for example, its website, its VLEs and hardcopy in the form of handbooks, prospectus and information leaflets. Good use is also made of noticeboards within the buildings.

3.2 Information on courses is closely aligned to that published by the awarding organisations and reference and links to them are included in College documents.

Each course publishes a course handbook which includes programme specifications taken from those published by the awarding organisation, course calendars including assessment dates and information on lecture content. The more general Student Handbook is also provided during induction. The content of the Student Handbook is regularly updated to reflect the needs and requests of students.

3.3 Students have some access to a VLE; currently three different systems are running. However, these are not fully operational and in some cases are prototypes. Students confirmed that they were able to access course materials either online or via email. It is understood that a decision on the selection of one VLE to serve all students is expected shortly and that full implementation will take place in early 2014.

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

3.4 The College has procedures in place to assure the quality of the information it publishes, although inaccuracies are not necessarily identified or resolved immediately. All published information in the form of handbooks and website content undergoes proof reading for inaccuracies, English and grammar and is submitted to the Principal for final sign off. Compliance with the information requirements of UKBA is assured by the continued scrutiny of the Agency's website and other published sources by the College Coordinator and confirmed by inspections carried out by UKBA. The website links and display are checked by the College Administrator. The team found broken links, spelling errors and incomplete accreditation lists in the website information before, during and after their visit. It is **advisable** for the College to implement formal and regular checking of website content and functionality.

3.5 The College fully understands the usefulness of social media to enable international students to maintain contact with family and friends overseas, but actively discourages its use during taught time. The College maintains a small presence on social media sites which is managed, monitored and moderated by the College Administrator.

3.6 Student feedback has been instrumental in informing the scope of the information published in the Student Handbook, and their comments and needs are considered in the content of the website and other information. Although they are not directly involved in the publications, their names and photographs are used to demonstrate achievement and social events on the website in graduation ceremony information.

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 plan³

| Stanfords College of UK Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of December 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 College: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the rigorous use of diagnostic testing of applicants (paragraph 1.4) | Diagnostic testing to be refined to provide increased subject specific test results with test carried out on a semester basis | Individual heads of department to take an active role in the further development of diagnostic test content to higher level of competency requirement | March 2014 | Head of Academics | Principal | Ongoing increase in key skills improvement |
| | Specific information obtained to assist course adjustments based on test feedback | Head of Academics to ensure regular test result monitoring systems are in place and maintained | March 2014 | Head of Academics | Principal | Overall increase in support course relevance |
| | Introduce and maintain job/career-based diagnostic tests based on employer requirements | Principal/Vice-Principal to establish relationships with relevant local employers to assist in the structuring of job-based diagnostic tests for students | June 2014 | Principal/Vice-Principal | Directors | Job/career related diagnostic testing results evaluated |
| | | | | | | Evidence of Diagnostic testing |

³ The College 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 College's awarding organisations.

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| | | | | | | development will be detailed in the minutes of Academic Committee meetings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective monitoring of attendance in supporting students' performance (paragraph 1.5) | <p>Student outcome performance to be at least maintained at current levels</p> <p>Establish an Attendance Model monitoring system to ensure correlation between absence and grades achieved is closely scrutinised, with the aim to achieve at least 80 per cent attendance for each student</p> <p>Set future attendance rate targets to increase to 95 per cent plus</p> | <p>Current monitoring methods to be maintained with additional specific analysis undertaken to assess attendance rates directly against performance and outcomes on a subject-by-subject, level-by-level basis</p> <p>Analyse the correlation between attendance rates and grades achieved on a semester basis</p> <p>Ensure systems in place to continually remind students of the importance of attendance</p> | <p>March 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>March 2014</p> | <p>Head of Administration</p> <p>Head of Academics</p> <p>Head of Academics</p> | <p>Vice-Principal</p> <p>Vice-Principal</p> <p>Vice-Principal</p> | <p>Outcome of student performance (qualifications, work obtained, further education)</p> <p>Increase in outcome levels (qualifications, work obtained, further education) displayed against attendance levels</p> <p>Evidence of attendance modelling and analysis results will be detailed in the minutes of Academic Committee meetings</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of a 'critical friend' in peer observation (paragraph 2.4) | Results of peer observation to greater influence internal good practice | Peer observation data collated across departments to further develop specific internal College code of good practice | April 2014 | Head of Departments | Principal | Senior lecturers/ heads of department to evaluate observation results |
| | Results of peer observation to improve continuing professional development planning and objectives | Internal continuing professional development courses designed to highlight and implement good practice obtained from peer observation data | April 2014 | Head of Academics | Principal | Implement change based on observation analysis |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the high quality and effective pastoral support (paragraph 2.6). | Enhance quantitative effects of pastoral support | Maintain accurate records of pastoral support given and use these records to further develop specific internal College code of good practice | April 2014 | Student Support Officer/ Registrar | Vice-Principal | Observe feedback results for reaction to pastoral support |
| | Evaluate the effectiveness of pastoral care through student feedback | Maintain current general feedback forms and ensure students are fully aware of the availability of feedback forms through reception and so on | Current | Student Support Officer/ Registrar | Vice-Principal | Evidence available in minutes of Senior Management Committee meetings |

| 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 College to: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise the mechanisms for staff to share pastoral and academic support interventions (paragraph 2.7) | <p>Staff from all departments are regularly made aware of the range of pastoral and academic support available at the college</p> <p>Regular intervention reports to be compiled and made available for staff reference</p> | <p>Support logs are centralised for ease of compilation and distribution</p> <p>Support reports are produced and issued to all members of staff</p> | <p>June 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p> | <p>Head of Academics/ Registrar</p> <p>Head of Administration</p> | <p>Vice-Principal</p> <p>Vice-Principal</p> | <p>Continued monitoring of support log compilations</p> <p>Interviews with staff members to monitor awareness of support activities</p> <p>Evidence available in minutes of Senior Management Committee meetings</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the use and detail of written feedback on student work (paragraph 2.8) | <p>Ensure all feedback is appropriate and timely</p> <p>Feedback policy standardised across all campuses in line with</p> | <p>Revise feedback documents and ensure cross-campus consistency</p> | <p>March 2014</p> | <p>Head of Academics/ Internal verifiers</p> | <p>Principal</p> | <p>Ongoing improvement of feedback process</p> |

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| | internal and external verification requirements | Implement regular feedback reporting to heads of departments | March 2014 | Head of Academics/ Internal verifiers | Principal | Continued monitoring for compliance with external references |
| | Ensure feedback demonstrates explicitly where improvement can be made in a way that assists future assessment, promoting higher future performance | Introduce examples of model assignments to reinforce feedback | March 2014 | Head of department Head of department/ lecturers | Head of Academics | Annual and Unit timetables produced for assignment hand-in and expected feedback |
| | Introduction of structured group feedback sessions to evaluate group reaction and assess overall group performance | Ensure feedback sessions are a two-way process, with the student given the opportunity to comment on or discuss the feedback delivered | March 2014 | Head of Academics | Head of Academics | Group feedback documents to be filed in group folders |
| | Ensure lecturers/heads of departments use the feedback and student reaction to feedback for future course development | Individual departments to hold regular meetings in order to consider how best to implement changes to courses based on student feedback | March 2014 | | Principal | Evidence of feedback development and analysis results will be detailed in the minutes of meetings of the Academic Committee All one-to-one feedback sessions to be documented |

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| | | | | | | and filed in academic student files |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement formal and regular checking of website content and functionality (paragraph 3.4). | Ensure content of all websites and electronic media presence is up-to-date, consistent across all sites and accurate | Formally appoint an electronic media team to monitor content | Feb 2014 | Principal | Directors | Initial content checklist provided to website and document compilers |
| | Ensure websites and all electronic media presence fully represents the activities of the college at each individual campus | Regularly check with Academic Department and Administration for updates | Feb 2014 - ongoing | Head of Media Team | Principal | Continual monitoring of media content |
| | | Implement a multi-level checking system to ensure accuracy | Feb 2014 | Principal | Directors | Change of content document (with sign-off) to be provided for each alteration of the website and/or official college document External monitoring requested to provide external media audit Evidence of monitoring of media accuracy |

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| | | | | | | will be detailed in the minutes of Senior Management Committee meetings |
| 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 is desirable for the provider to: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reference and synchronise all policies and procedures to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraphs 1.8 and 2.2) | <p>Ensure all policies are consistent across all campuses</p> <p>Ensure all procedures at all campuses are consistent and synchronise to a single quality code</p> <p>Ensure the College quality code complies with all external quality code requirements</p> | <p>Perform a full policy document audit on all official college documentation</p> <p>Where necessary re-write policies to create consistency in documentation</p> <p>Check all internal policies conform to external quality code requirements</p> | <p>Feb 2014</p> <p>April 2014</p> <p>April 2014 - ongoing</p> | <p>Principal</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Administration Coordinator</p> | <p>Directors</p> <p>Directors</p> <p>Principal</p> | <p>Universal policies and documentation evident in all campuses</p> <p>Compliance with required quality codes through policy audit</p> <p>Evidence of synchronisation will be detailed in the minutes of Senior Management Committee meetings</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage students in the use of feedback to improve their future performance (paragraph 2.9) | <p>Ensure students fully appreciate and utilise the feedback received from both internal and external sources to improve future performance</p> | <p>Include in student documentation information regarding importance of appreciation of feedback</p> | <p>March 2014</p> | <p>Principal</p> | <p>Directors</p> | <p>Continued monitoring of student feedback</p> |
| | <p>Ensure procedures are in place to monitor levels of improvement in performance based on student reaction to feedback</p> | <p>Devise and implement monitoring procedures to evaluate performance</p> | <p>March 2014</p> | <p>Head of Academics</p> | <p>Vice-Principal</p> | <p>Continued monitoring of performance rates</p> |
| | <p>Ensure students' reaction and discussion on feedback is documented</p> | <p>Introduce documentation to fully demonstrate reaction of students to feedback</p> | <p>March 2014</p> | <p>Lecturers</p> | <p>Head of Academics</p> | <p>Document all one-to-one and group feedback sessions; copies to be held in group and individual student academic files</p> |
| | <p>Ensure feedback demonstrates that assessment is transparent and fair</p> | <p>Ensure students are aware that completed feedback reports are available at any time for their reference</p> | | | | <p>Evidence of feedback development and analysis results will be detailed in the minutes of Academic Committee meetings and in the minutes of Student Committee meetings</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the impact of staff development on the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 2.13) | Ensure a strong policy of continuing professional development is in place | Re-evaluate continuing professional development policy | July 2014 | Head of Academics | Vice-Principal | Continuing professional development audit by Senior Management Committee |
| | Ensure continuing professional development is up-to-date with educational requirements | Undertake review of current educational requirements with regard to current and future planned qualifications | July 2014 - ongoing | Head of Academics | Vice-Principal | Academic Board to monitor quality of teaching and learning |
| | Ensure accurate monitoring systems are actively used to monitor increases in the quality of teaching and learning | Implement monitoring system to evaluate benefits gained from continuing professional development policy | July 2014 | Principal | Directors | Course development documentation produced based on feedback analysis |
| | Ensure feedback to students and reaction to feedback from students assist in the improvement of the quality of course delivery | Ensure all feedback documentation is evaluated in order to provide course development plans | July 2014 | Head of Academics | Principal | Evidence available additionally in minutes of good practice meetings (Senior Management Committee) |
| | Ensure sharing of good practice, both across the organisation and with local or associated colleges/organisations | Introduce regular meetings with a view to sharing both internal and external good practice | July 2014 | Vice-Principal | Principal | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> roll out and align the content of one virtual learning environment | To implement a uniform and effective virtual learning environment across all campuses | Formally agree on choice of virtual learning environment system | Feb 2014 | Head of IT | Directors | Virtual learning environment in place and operating satisfactorily |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| across both campuses (paragraphs 2.16 and 3.3). | Ensure virtual learning environment content is both up-to-date and accurate | Instruct virtual learning environment designers to construct and finalise working virtual learning environment model | Feb 2014 | Head of IT | Directors | Head of IT/ Head of Academics to monitor use of virtual learning environment |
| | Ensure students are fully trained in the use of the virtual learning environment | Implement working virtual learning environment system | April 2014 | Head of IT | Directors | through academic department student feedback |
| | Ensure accurate monitoring of the use of the virtual learning environment is carried out in order to evaluate its worth | Update student documentation to include virtual learning environment details | March 2014 | Principal | Directors | Use of student feedback and suggestion options from students to continually improve the facility |
| | Improve and expand the capabilities of the virtual learning environment as required in line with results obtained from the monitoring of use | Ensure teaching staff keep accurate records as to the use of the virtual learning environment system through specific feedback | April 2014 - ongoing | Head of Academics | Principal | |
| | | Continue to refine and expand the virtual learning environment operability and resource base | Ongoing | Head of IT | Head of Academics/ Principal | Evidence of virtual learning environment development will be detailed in the minutes of Senior Management Committee meetings |

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 .

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

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

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.

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 college.

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**.

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