London School of Technology

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

December 2013

Key findings about London School of Technology

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in December 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 the Association of Business Practitioners (ABP), Pearson and the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM).

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.

Recommendations

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

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

- review the effectiveness of its committee structures (paragraph 1.2)
- review the terms of reference for the Assessment Board (paragraph 1.2)
- embed a formalised approach to the consideration of external verifiers' reports and the monitoring of subsequent action plans (paragraph 1.5)
- develop a system for monitoring student achievement that identifies, in particular, those not making satisfactory progress (paragraph 2.7).

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

- embed the oversight of the monitoring of teaching and learning practice to enhance learning opportunities (paragraph 2.4)
- implement a variety of appropriate assessment modes in line with its policies (paragraph 2.5)
- review the qualifications of teaching staff in the Staff Recruitment Policy (paragraph 2.6)
- review the Learning Resources Strategy in light of plans to increase student numbers (paragraph 2.10)
- continue to develop the virtual learning environment as a tool to support student learning (paragraph 2.11)
- review the Communications Policy as it evolves to ensure its effectiveness (paragraph 3.4).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London School of Technology (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 ABP, Pearson and ICM. The review was carried out by Professor Geoffrey Elliott, Mrs Amanda Greason, Mrs Angela Maguire (reviewers) and Mr Alan Soutter (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 a range of documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding organisation and meetings with staff and students. The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- Policies and procedures of the 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 College was established in 2009 and commenced teaching in February 2012. It was subject to an REO visit in December 2012. A follow-up annual monitoring visit was due to be held in December 2013, but as its student numbers and staff had grown substantially in the last year, a full REO review has been undertaken in accordance with the procedures. At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations:

The Association of Business Practitioners (ABP)

Level 7 Extended Diploma in Strategic Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care Sector

Pearson

Level 7 BTEC Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership
Level 5 BTEC HND in Business
Level 5 BTEC HND in Computing and Systems Development

The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM)

Level 6 Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management
Level 6 Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies
Level 6 Advanced Diploma n Professional Computing and Information Processing
Level 6 Advanced Diploma in Business Studies
Level 6 Graduate Diploma in Business Management
Level 6 Graduate Diploma in Management Studies
Level 5 Diploma in Legal Studies
Level 5 Diploma in Business Studies

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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

Level 5 Diploma in Hospitality Management
Level 5 Diploma in Professional Computing and Information Processing

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College's responsibilities depend on those stipulated by the awarding organisations. All the awarding organisations provide the curriculum framework and programme specifications. For ICM programmes, the awarding organisation retains responsibility for setting and marking assessments. For Pearson and ABP, setting assessments is a shared responsibility with first marking and internal verification taking place at the College followed by external verification by the awarding organisations. The College retains responsibility for monitoring the quality of higher education and teaching.

Recent developments

The College has increased its student numbers substantially since the review in December 2012 from 498 to 1443 (December 2013). The College has ceased offering courses in Legal Studies due to poor recruitment.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A student submission was coordinated by a small group of students following a questionnaire of students in the College. During the visit, some students met the review team and engaged in useful discussion.

Detailed findings about London School of Technology

1 Academic standards

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

1.1   The management of academic standards delegated to the College by its awarding organisations is largely effective. The College recognises that it is still in the early stages of its relationships with its awarding organisations. Academic standards are established and monitored by the relevant awarding organisations, which are responsible for reviewing the quality of the provision, the development of the curriculum, the provision of programme specifications and intended learning outcomes. The College has delegated responsibility for the design of all Pearson and ABP assessments, which are subject to formal internal verification and subsequent external verification by the awarding organisation. For ICM courses, students sit formal examinations set by ICM.

1.2   Responsibility for the management of academic standards and quality of the student educational experience delegated by the awarding organisations rests with the Principal, who holds a part-time position. The College has a Quality Assurance Manual to guide the maintenance and delivery of standards overseen by the awarding organisations. The College has a number of committees which oversee the application and maintenance of standards including the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Quality Management Steering Group (QMSG), Course Committees and the Assessment Board. The terms of reference and composition of the committees setting out their explicit responsibilities and reporting lines are not fully articulated and the relationship between the committees is unclear. The minutes of the SMT provide evidence of oversight of academic standards, but there was a lack of evidence of the Assessment Board formally ratifying student progression and awards and monitoring student achievement. It is **advisable** that the College review the effectiveness of its committee structures. It is also **advisable** that the College review the terms of reference for the Assessment Board.

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

1.3   The external reference points for the courses taught by the College are largely determined by the awarding organisations with reference to the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The College is beginning to engage with the Quality Code. For example, there is evidence of staff development, particularly in the areas of assessment practice and learning and teaching with reference to the relevant chapters of the Quality Code. The College demonstrated awareness of *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* and *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning* in its development of assessment methods and approaches to teaching, learning and verification.

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

1.4   The procedures for verification are clearly articulated in both the Quality Assurance Manual and the assessment and internal verifier strategy. There are two College internal verifiers. All assignment briefs after internal verification are uploaded to the virtual learning environment (VLE). Presently, the entire internal verification process (assignment briefs and assessed work) is carried out by the lead internal verifier and one teacher. The College plans to widen the quality enhancement benefits of internal verification experience to all

assessors. This policy is in the early stages of implementation so it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness.

1.5   The responsibility for external moderation, verification or examining varies depending on the awarding organisation. The College is responsible for the design of all Pearson and ABP assessments, which are subject to formal internal verification and subsequent external verification by the awarding organisation. The College acts as a tutorial centre for the ICM awards; the examinations for these are set and marked by the awarding body. The reports of the external verifiers from ABP and Pearson indicate satisfaction with the academic standards of the College. However, the College has an ineffective procedure for formally recording the action plan for responding to recommendations from external verifiers and there is no consistent College-wide approach. There is evidence that recommendations have been noted and considered, but the College could not demonstrate a coherent action planning process that can be used to address and monitor the recommendations of the verifier. It is **advisable** that the College embed a formalised approach to the consideration of external verifiers' reports and the monitoring of subsequent action plans.

The review team has **confidence** in the College'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   The College's responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are set out in paragraph 1.1. However, the management of learning opportunities would be enhanced by explicitly including reference to this within the terms of reference for committees within the committee structure.

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

2.2   The College's use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities is described in paragraph 1.2.

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

2.3   The current procedures do not enable the College to have adequate oversight of the quality of teaching and learning. For example, although the students are positive about the quality of their teachers, the feedback they provide on their courses is limited on the pedagogic aspects of the College's provision. Similarly, the teaching observation policy, which is in the early stages of implementation, is not used to provide the College with oversight of teaching matters. Although the Assessment and Internal Verification Policy refers to a Standardisation Meeting to share the outcomes of the teaching observation process, the team heard that this element of the process had not been adopted and that these outcomes remain confidential between observer and observee. This practice prevents the identification and dissemination of good practice. To ensure sharing of best practice and enhancement of students' learning opportunities, a holistic analysis of teaching and learning observations is needed.

2.4   The College has developed a Teaching and Learning Policy following a recommendation from the previous REO that has clearly been informed by the Quality Code, but it does not indicate how the College can measure its effectiveness in teaching and learning. It was implemented with effect from October 2013 so it is too soon to measure its effectiveness. It would be **desirable** for the College to embed oversight of the monitoring of teaching and learning practice to enhance learning opportunities.

2.5   The College's assessment practices are satisfactory but its approach to the design of assessments for Pearson courses could be improved. For example, the College's requirements for the design of assignments are scenario and vocationally contextualised as set out in the Assessment and Internal Verification Strategy and the Internal Quality Assurance for assignment briefs. However, the majority of assignments, although based on the learning outcomes, are descriptive, and this results in a lack of appropriate assessment modes. A positive feature of the assessment process is the application of the College's requirement for written feedback to students on a minimum of three pieces of formative assessment. This is particularly helpful to the students being prepared for ICM examinations. It would be **desirable** for the College to implement a variety of appropriate assessment modes in line with its policies.

2.6   The College's Staff Recruitment Policy details the process for the appointment of staff, but it does not articulate any academic, professional or teaching qualifications for academic staff. The College provides an induction programme for new members of staff. The review team were informed that all staff are qualified to Master's level or above but this was not supported by the curriculum vitae supplied in evidence. In addition, few staff had practical work experience that would enhance the delivery of the College's vocational courses. It would be **desirable** for the College to review the qualifications of teaching staff in the Staff Recruitment Policy.

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

2.7   The College's provision for student welfare is set out in the Quality Assurance Manual, which is comprehensive in outlining its approach to the provision of pastoral care effectively delivered by its welfare officers, academic and administrative staff. Students are allocated a three-hour tutorial for each course on a weekly basis. This time is used to deliver additional learning support to an entire group of students but also to identify and counsel, on an individual basis, those students who may require specific support. However, the College does not systematically use student progression and achievement data to identify students who are not making satisfactory progress so that dedicated academic support can be provided. This process had been the subject of an advisable recommendation from the previous review, which recorded that 'the College should establish a more formal process for the monitoring of students' achievements and act efficiently on the analysis of student data at key stages within the quality cycle'. Although some progress has been made in this regard, this is not sufficiently embedded within the College's quality procedures. The College acknowledged that insufficient progress has been made on this recommendation. It is **advisable** that the College develop a system for monitoring student achievement that identifies, in particular, those not making satisfactory progress.

2.8   Students are provided with ample opportunities to provide feedback on their experiences at the College both formally and informally. Formal feedback is gathered from student representatives and considered at course committees and at the annual student meeting. In addition, a brief questionnaire is completed at the end of each module which elicits student views on matters specific to the module in question, as well as course and college-related matters. However, this questionnaire does not provide an opportunity to gather specific feedback on teaching and the module (see paragraph 2.3). The completed

questionnaires are read by the Principal who provides the SMT with a summary of issues requiring attention.

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

2.9   The College's approach to staff development is effective in providing staff with opportunities to enhance their knowledge, expertise and skills. The College has particularly recognised, in response to the introduction of the new Pearson provision, the need for specific staff development for these courses. As a result, a programme of events has taken place on a wide range of topics including assessment, learning outcomes, verification and teaching observation which have been valued by the staff.

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

2.10   Learning resources for the current number of students are adequate. The College has a number of purpose-built lecture rooms, where the students sit cinema style. The College has a library facility with electronic access to a variety of journals and this is suitable and sufficient for the current student numbers. Students supplement this with membership of other public London libraries. However, with the recent exponential increase in student numbers, the effectiveness of teaching with tutorial classes of 60 or more is limited. It would be **desirable** for the College to review the Learning Resources Strategy in light of plans to increase student numbers.

2.11   The College uses a VLE to communicate with its students, providing them with information related to teaching and programme administration. This system is used for the submission of student assignments with some staff providing feedback to students. The VLE has recently been developed and is not yet complete. It is used as a repository for course material and there are plans to develop it further into a fully interactive facility. It would be **desirable** for the College to continue to develop the VLE as a tool to support student learning.

The review team has **confidence** that the College 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 College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1   The College effectively communicates information to potential and current students. The College website is the main medium for communicating information about the College to potential students and includes information about learning opportunities on both academic and non-academic provision. Website content includes the Student Handbook, the Quality Assurance Manual and a range of policies for both staff and students. The website summarises the structure of each programme the College offers and has a link to the appropriate awarding organisations for further information. The team identified that information on the fees charged to students for registering with the awarding organisation had been omitted and the website was amended during the review to include this.

3.2   The College has a developing VLE to which individual teachers may upload teaching materials, schemes and assignment briefs. It also includes access to assignment submissions and feedback; student personal details and progress reports; the teaching timetable; teaching notes and assignments; course resources; results and assessments; and the 'noticeboard'. Internal communication with students by the College is via the VLE.

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

3.3   The College has recently developed a Communications Policy which sets out the methods of communication with students and the lines of responsibility for approval of information about learning opportunities. This Policy has been put into place to establish a single point of authorisation to ensure information is accurate and complete. It was approved in November 2013, so it is too soon to measure its effectiveness. The Principal is ultimately responsible for approving all forms of information. There is a need to ensure that College senior staff job titles as represented on the website are accurate and appropriate for their roles in the College. There is little evidence that students are currently involved in reviewing the accuracy or completeness of information, but they expressed satisfaction with the range of published information.

3.4   The College has recognised the importance of obtaining student feedback on the website from students and agents and more generally on all published media, and reported its intention to seek students' input in the review and enhancement of published material. It would be **desirable** for the Communications Policy be reviewed as it evolves to ensure its effectiveness.

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

Action plan[3]

London School of Technology action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of December 2013						
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:						
• review the effectiveness of its committee structures (paragraph 1.2)	To increase the effectiveness of the committee structure	A report will be written on the current effectiveness of the committee structure and how it might be improved/developed	Mar 2014	Lead internal verifier (IV)	Principal	Report signed off by Principal
		The report will be presented to the Senior Management Team	April 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
		The actions arising from the agreed report will be implemented	May 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	Actions completed and noted in Senior Management Team minutes
		Evaluation to be conducted to prove their effectiveness	Jul 2014	Vice Principal	Senior Management Team	Feedback collected from committee members

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[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.

• review the terms of reference for the Assessment Board (paragraph 1.2)	To have appropriate terms of references for the Assessment Board or its equivalent evolved from advisable recommendation 1	A report will be written on the current terms of reference for the Assessment Board and how they might be improved	Mar 2014	Lead IV	Principal	Report signed off by Principal
		The report will be presented to the Senior Management Team for approval	April 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
		New/improved terms of reference to be approved	April 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	New/improved terms of reference
		Evaluation to be conducted to prove the effectiveness of the new Terms of References	Jul 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Feedback collected from committee members
• embed a formalised approach to the consideration of external verifiers' reports and the monitoring of subsequent action plans (paragraph 1.5)	To develop an appropriate approach to the consideration of external verifiers' reports and the monitoring of subsequent action plans	A policy, including a set of procedures, will be written concerning how the College approaches and monitors external verifiers' reports	April 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	Report signed off by Principal
		The Policy and procedures will be presented for approval to the Senior Management Team	May 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
		Any actions arising will be implemented	June 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
		Evaluation to be conducted to prove the effectiveness of the new Policy	Aug 2014	Vice Principal	Senior Management Team	Feedback collected from members of staff/external verifiers
• develop a system for monitoring student achievement that identifies, in particular, those not making satisfactory progress (paragraph 2.7).	To develop an appropriate system for monitoring students at risk	A 'Students at Risk' policy will be written	April 2014	Lead IV	Principal	Report signed off by Principal
		The Policy will be presented to the Principal for approval and then to the Senior Management Team	May 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
		Any actions arising will be implemented	June 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
		Evaluation to be conducted to prove the effectiveness of the new Policy	Jul 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Student feedback
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 provider to:						
• embed the oversight of the monitoring of teaching and learning practice to enhance	To develop an appropriate system for the monitoring of teaching and learning practice based on the current Teaching and	The motion that teachers are to be 'staff reviewed' at least twice per year is taken to the Senior Management Team	March 2014	Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team agrees the action

learning opportunities (paragraph 2.4)	Learning Policy	Create a yearly schedule for monitoring teachers	April 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	Schedule approved
		Monitoring reports are analysed and the results are fed into each teacher's staff review	Ongoing from May 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	Monitoring reports are fed into staff reviews
• implement a variety of appropriate assessment modes in line with its policies (paragraph 2.5)	To ensure that the College has a variety of appropriate assessment modes in line with its policies	Assessors will be reminded of the details of the Assessments Policy	March 2014	All assessing staff	Head of Department	Assessors attend staff meeting
		Every assessor will declare what assessments they are using for each subject	April 2014	All assessing staff	Vice Principal	The declarations are submitted
		Senior Management will assess the choice of assessments and recommend changes if required	May 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	All declarations are received
		Actions arising to be taken forward	Ongoing	Vice Principal	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
• review the qualifications of teaching staff in the Staff Recruitment Policy (paragraph 2.6)	To ensure that the College has appropriately qualified and trained teaching staff	The qualifications of teaching staff are to be reviewed. This will include educational qualifications as well as professional and/or technical qualifications	March 2014	Vice Principal and Director of Human Resources	Principal	A report summarising the qualifications of teaching staff is created
		A report will be created summarising any	April 2014	Vice Principal	Director of Human	Report signed off by Director of

		deficiencies in the qualifications of teaching staff and setting minimum standards for future staff			Resources	Human Resources
		Report is ratified by the Senior Management Team	May 2014	Director of Human Resources	Senior Management Team	Senior Management Team minutes
		If any deficiencies, staff development support will be provided	Aug 2014	Director of Human Resources	Director of Human Resources	Peer observation and staff appraisal
• review the Learning Resources Strategy in light of plans to increase student numbers (paragraph 2.10)	To ensure that the College has an appropriate Learning Resources Strategy	The learning strategy will be reviewed and actions arising implemented accordingly	April 2014	Vice Principal	Senior Management Team	The review is signed off by the Senior Management Team
		Evaluation to be conducted to prove the effectiveness of the new strategy	Aug 2014	Vice Principal	Senior Management Team	Student feedback
• continue to develop the virtual learning environment as a tool to support student learning (paragraph 2.11)	To ensure that the College has an appropriate virtual learning environment that will support student learning	A decision will be made whether to purchase TurnItIn - this will affect use of the virtual learning environment	March 2014	Senior Management Team	Board of Directors	Senior Management Team minutes
		A review of the virtual learning environment will be conducted. This will include its use by teachers and students	April 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	The report is signed off by the Vice Principal

		An Action Plan will be created from the review and presented to the Senior Management Team	May 2014	Vice Principal	Principal	Senior Management Team minutes and student and teacher feedback
• review the Communi-cations Policy as it evolves to ensure its effectiveness (paragraph 3.4)	To ensure that the College has an appropriate Communications Policy	The Communications Policy will be reviewed and implemented accordingly. This will include effectiveness measurements	May 2014	Director of Marketing	Senior Management Team	The report is signed off by the Senior Management Team
		An Action Plan is created from the review	June 2014	Director of Marketing	Senior Management Team	The Action Plan is accepted by the Senior Management Team

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.

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[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**.