



London Regal College Ltd

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

December 2013

Key findings about London Regal College Ltd

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 awards it offers on behalf of ATHE Ltd, The Institute of Administrative Management (IAM) and Pearson.

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 accuracy and completeness of 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**:

- regular additional academic support classes (paragraph 2.7)
- the formal tutorial system (paragraph 2.8).

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:

- revise the remit and reporting lines of academic committees (paragraphs 1.2 and 1.9)
- develop a systematic approach to action planning (paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 1.9 and 2.4)
- develop a more comprehensive analysis of cohort data (paragraph 1.4)
- ensure the accuracy of accreditation information (paragraph 3.6).

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

- produce a College programme specification for the HND in Business (paragraph 1.6)
- engage further with the Quality Code (paragraph 1.7)
- review the presentation of the policies relating to teaching and learning (paragraph 2.2)
- strengthen the link between appraisal of staff and their training and development (paragraph 2.5)
- develop a publications policy (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at the London Regal College 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 College 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 College delivers on behalf of ATHE Ltd, Pearson, the Institute of Administrative Management (IAM) and the University of London. The review was carried out by Dr Colin Fryer, Mr Ahmed Junaid, Mr Paul Monroe (reviewers) and Dr Heather Barrett-Mold (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 self-evaluation, student submission, samples of student work, annual reviews, external examiners' reports, further documentation supplied by the College and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- regulations of the College's 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](#).

London Regal College Ltd is an independent college of further and higher education, located on Commercial Road, London E1. The College was incorporated in 2006. The present owners and management took over in November 2010. The College's mission is to provide students with the opportunity to study recognised programmes at affordable prices and with the benefit of quality teaching. The first students were recruited in January 2011. In February 2012 the College achieved Highly Trusted Status. Currently it has 418 students.

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

ATHE Ltd

Level 7 Diploma in Healthcare Management
Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management

Pearson

Level 5 HND Diploma in Business

IAM

Level 4 Diploma in Business and Administrative Management
Level 5 Diploma in Business and Administrative Management
Level 6 Diploma in Business and Administrative Management
Level 6 Extended Diploma in Business and Administrative Management

University of London

Tuition provider for LLB (Hons), but with no formal agreement with the University of London, that is, it is not a recognised centre.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight

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

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College's responsibilities in relation to its awarding organisations are clearly defined through formal agreements. It has no such agreement with the University of London. For all awards, the College is responsible for recruitment of students, learning and teaching, student support and learning resources. With the exception of Pearson, teaching teams use assessments and examination papers directly provided by the respective awarding organisation. There is a shared responsibility for public information and some resources.

Recent developments

Currently most students are from overseas and most of those are registered with IAM. College managers are looking to change this focus to recruit more home students at all levels from 2 to 7 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Late in 2013, IAM entered into liquidation and the College is currently in negotiations with another awarding organisation to take over the previous qualification or provide exemption for the IAM registered students, enabling them to move their registration to a new organisation.

Students' contribution to the review

The College has kept students informed of the review process. Students studying on higher education programmes at the College produced a written submission for the review team. The team found this helpful and explored student views in meetings with students to gain a clear picture of the student learning experience.

Detailed findings about London Regal College Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College's managerial structure is coherent and reflects its small size. Specific responsibilities are allocated to designated post-holders. Lines of accountability are clearly understood by the management team. The Principal is responsible for the strategic development of the curriculum and the maintenance of quality and standards in respect of the awarding organisations' requirements. Course coordinators are responsible for academic standards at programme level. The Academic Management Team, which is headed by the Principal and includes the course coordinators and the Quality Assurance Coordinator, is responsible for the monitoring and review of academic standards.

1.2 The current committee structure does not clearly differentiate between commercial and academic decision making. The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for quality and standards. The Management Committee is responsible for business planning. The functional responsibilities of the two committees are not consistently applied because of the infrequency of the meetings of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, which meets only twice a year, whereas the Management Committee, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer has scheduled monthly meetings. As a result, the Management Committee tends to take responsibility for quality and standards through much of the year. It is **advisable** for the College to revise the remit and reporting lines of academic committees.

1.3 All meetings are minuted, although details of discussions are sometimes too brief and actions not always clearly described or followed up in subsequent meetings. Intervention strategies at the programme-level are identified at staff meetings and actions are recorded. However, the minutes from these meetings are not received by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee to inform college level systems. Improving the quality of the minutes of meetings and the tracking of actions would demonstrate explicitly how the College manages the maintenance of academic standards, and provide formal assurance at subsequent meetings that responses to identified issues had been taken. It is **advisable** for the College to develop a systematic approach to action planning.

1.4 Managers have access to accurate data but it is not rigorously analysed to inform the quality assurance process. Underlying success rates and student progression as a measure of the completion of units of study within a specified time period are not critically evaluated. There is no comparison of student achievement at each assessment point within an academic year to identify trends. On some programmes it can be difficult for the College to access student achievement information from the awarding organisation. As stated in paragraph 1.3, action planning needs to be strengthened and the College should clearly record consideration of student achievement in order to inform strategies to improve performance and to disseminate good practice. It is **advisable** for the College to develop a more comprehensive analysis of cohort data.

1.5 The College conscientiously implements the requirements set out in the awarding organisations' accreditation or registration handbooks, particularly in respect of the roles and delegated responsibilities for managing academic standards. These are appropriately understood and correctly interpreted by the College. The College works closely with its awarding organisations and as an approved centre demonstrates that it is meeting the regulatory requirements. The Senior Management Team is proactively working through the transition arrangements for students on the IAM programme and putting strategies in place to assure quality and standards for these students.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.6 The College's current academic provision is offered under partnership arrangements with its awarding organisations, which are responsible for ensuring that their processes and procedures take into account the QCF. With the exception of Pearson, teaching teams use assessments and examination papers directly provided by the respective awarding organisation. Programme aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly referenced within this qualification documentation. However, the College does not itself produce a programme specification for the HND in Business as required by Pearson. It would be **desirable** for the College to produce a College programme specification for the HND in Business.

1.7 The College is in the early stages of engaging with and developing its understanding of the Quality Code. The College ensures that members of staff are aware of the expectations of the Quality Code. College quality systems have been initially mapped against the relevant sections of the Quality Code, *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality*, but further detailed work is required as the College's quality framework is developed. Actions to be taken as a result of the mapping process have yet to be identified and prioritised. The College's policies and procedures currently make no reference to the Quality Code. It would be **desirable** for the College to further engage with the Quality Code.

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

1.8 Appropriate procedures are in place for the internal verification of assignments designed and marked by the College. Staff are clear about their assessment responsibilities and each Course Coordinator liaises closely with their awarding organisation to ensure that students meet the required standards. All assignment briefs are internally verified before they are issued to students and a sample of student work is externally moderated by the awarding body. ATHE Ltd programme assignments are set by the awarding organisation, with the College being responsible for first marking and internal verification. The College is internally verifying IAM assessments while transition arrangements are being finalised. Student work scrutinised by the team also indicates this process is effective.

1.9 ATHE Ltd external verifier reports are considered at staff meetings and actions are clearly identified. The reports are also received by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee and the Management Committee and it is unclear where the locus of responsibility lies for responding to the external verifier's comments. The annual monitoring process does not formally record actions or review progress against previous actions. The College quality assurance framework makes no reference to the role of the committees in the oversight of external verifier reports as part of the ongoing monitoring procedure. The College is waiting to receive its first external verification report from Pearson and needs to strengthen the process for ensuring that awarding organisations' reports inform academic standards through rigorous use of effective action planning.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards 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 coherent structure for the management of academic standards described in paragraph 1.1 is equally successful in managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. Staff have a clear understanding of the management structure and all academic, administrative and management roles are clearly defined. The College is small and senior members of staff are close to the provision, and able to identify and deal with teaching and learning issues promptly.

2.2 The Teaching and Learning Policy does not provide a coherent basis for the development of excellence in curriculum delivery and support. Many aspects of teaching and learning are dealt with in a series of short policies, but these are not brought together in a clear and unequivocal manner. The content of the present policy document more closely resembles a student charter. It would be **desirable** for the College to review the presentation of the policies relating to teaching and learning.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.3 The College has made constructive use of the favourable report produced by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2012 and has implemented much of the advice contained in it. As described in paragraph 1.7, the College has started to map its work against the Quality Code. A review of all policies and procedures against the Quality Code is planned, but clear outcomes are yet to emerge.

2.4 Course Review committees, which include student members, systematically review programmes on an annual basis. The outcomes are reported to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee and from there to the Management Committee. The programme reviews address issues relating to examination results, facilities and resources, administration, teaching and learning and student feedback. The minutes of the meetings are not always clear and actions are not well defined. By the time the outcomes are reported to the Management Committee they are often lacking in detail.

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

2.5 A system of peer observation is developing. The College intends to build upon what has been achieved so far. Videos are made of team teaching events, which are used to supplement the peer observation process. Teachers share best practice in regular informal meetings between course coordinators, the teaching staff and the Principal. There is a Sharing Effective Teaching Practice policy. The College makes effective use of formal annual teaching observations and the documentation used addresses appropriate issues. Teachers are provided with oral feedback on observations and the outcomes are made available to students online. It is, however, unclear how the outcomes are used to influence training and development. It would be **desirable** for the College to strengthen the link between staff appraisal and their training and development.

2.6 The College consistently captures and reviews students' views in 'Reports on Teachers', and through wider student feedback. If there are issues concerned with teacher performance the Principal discusses this with the individual concerned.

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

2.7 The College provides well-organised learning support classes in English, information technology and assignment writing. These weekly classes are open to all students free of charge. The College has an open recruitment policy and recognises that this means that some students need additional support. Academic staff are effective in identifying students with learning needs. The take-up of support classes has so far been disappointing, but the College is taking steps to emphasise the importance of such classes and to make them more accessible. Regular additional academic support classes are **good practice**.

2.8 The College offers well-planned and documented individual tutorials on a regular basis. On-demand tutorials for students nearing their examinations and assignments are also used. This is supported by good use of individual learning plans to plan lessons, set targets and monitor student progress. This helps to address issues raised by the roll-on, roll-off enrolment favoured by the College. The formal tutorial system is **good practice**.

2.9 Pastoral support for students is effective and supports the College's stated aims and objectives. The students testify to a largely informal, open-door system and to accessible, one-to-one guidance on pastoral and financial issues, including advice on visas and funding. Special mention was made of the lengths to which the College went to support a student who had been ill for some time.

2.10 Students receive a valuable induction, supported by a comprehensive student handbook. The College makes good use of the virtual learning environment through the induction process. The student handbook contains a great deal of information on administration and fees and some information on policies and procedures. The students believe that this helps them to settle quickly and confidently into college life.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.11 There is an effective staff appraisal system that includes sections on achievements, objectives, actions, career aspirations and an individual training log. The appraiser's comments are linked to the annual student survey 'Report on Teachers'. Consideration is given by the College to the financial support for staff of any training or development that may be required. The College keeps a clear record of the continuing professional development undertaken by staff in the maintenance of their professional status. However, as in paragraph 2.5, it is unclear how outcomes of training and development are monitored for impact and pedagogical benefit.

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

2.12 The College provides a library, computer room with internet access and a virtual learning environment (VLE). Feedback from students indicates that they would like to see these facilities enhanced, although they were keen to say that the College had responded to their request for improved library resources, which they appreciated. External consultants have undertaken a formal review of the learning resources and supporting materials to help progress the issues identified by the students, leading to the library resources being enhanced.

2.13 The VLE makes a significant contribution to teaching and learning. The academic staff members are responsible for uploading the information about their subject areas. Each course coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the materials uploaded are

consistent and accurate. They also make recommendations concerning the structure of the VLE. There is no formal policy in place although the College's Webmaster is responsible for its development.

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 Public information

How effectively does the College's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?

3.1 The College publishes a clearly written set of information for students and staff. This includes a website, a prospectus, student and staff handbooks and programme handbooks. Information provided is clear, consistent and easily accessible.

3.2 The VLE is easy to link to through the College website. It is used to provide information about the College by including the student handbook, which contains relevant policies and procedures. The VLE is effective in its provision of programme specific information. Information from awarding organisations is published accurately as are details of programme content, unit descriptors learning outcomes of the modules and pass criteria. Student handbooks are made available at induction.

How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.3 The College has formal and informal mechanisms in place to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the information that it provides. It has a policy that deals with the information provided through the website, but no overarching publications policy. The Principal has overall responsibility for the accuracy and consistency of information that the College provides. It would be **desirable** for the College to develop a publications policy.

3.4 An external consultant, reporting directly to the Principal, reviews the College policies, procedures, website and other information. There is no formal report generated for this activity but the consultant works closely with the Principal in order to ensure that any actions are dealt with immediately.

3.5 The College's Webmaster updates information on the website and keeps a log of all the changes made to the information provided through the website. The Webmaster receives direct instructions from the Principal and the Chief Executive Officer. The Webmaster is also responsible for the design of the VLE.

3.6 The accreditations tab on the College's website references all the awarding organisations for the programmes offered by the College. This includes the University of London, although other areas of the website clarify that the College is purely a tuition provider and does not register or assess students of the University. While the website makes this clear, it is **advisable** for the College to ensure the accuracy of accreditation information.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Action plan³

London Regal College 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"> regular additional academic support classes (paragraph 2.7) 	Meet student demand for additional academic support	To offer need based learning opportunities to students during the course of the year	15 December 2014	Course coordinators	Principal	Formal and informal feedback from students (both written and verbal) Academic Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes Course review committee meeting minutes

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 provider's awarding organisations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the formal tutorial system (paragraph 2.8). 	<p>Provide individual support to students</p>	<p>To offer one-to-one guidance and support</p> <p>To assess students for any learning needs and/or learning difficulties</p>	<p>15 December 2014</p>	<p>Lecturers</p>	<p>Course coordinators</p>	<p>End of semester feedback from students and teachers</p> <p>Academic Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes</p> <p>Course Review Committee meeting minutes</p>
<p>Advisable</p>	<p>Intended outcomes</p>	<p>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</p>	<p>Target date(s)</p>	<p>Action by</p>	<p>Reported to</p>	<p>Evaluation (process or evidence)</p>
<p>The team considers that it is advisable for the College to:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revise the remit and reporting lines of academic committees (paragraphs 1.2 and 1.9) 	<p>Amend and clarify the roles and responsibilities along with reporting lines for Course Review and Academic and Quality Assurance committees</p>	<p>To revise, review and redraw the lines of responsibilities for all committees so that academic committees pick up academic issues and the management committee deals with the commercial matters</p>	<p>30 May 2014</p>	<p>Principal, and Academic Consultant</p>	<p>Course Review Committee, Academic and Quality Assurance Committee, and Management Committee</p>	<p>Minutes of Course Review Committee meeting</p> <p>Minutes of Academic and Quality Assurance meeting</p>

		To redraft the Quality Assurance Policy and make amendments accordingly To communicate these changes to all committee members and the management team				Revised College policies and procedures documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a systematic approach to action planning (paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 1.9 and 2.4) 	To guide the administration staff (responsible for recording meeting minutes) to ensure that all meeting minutes have clear action points with deadlines and person(s) responsible	31 March 2014	Academic Consultant	Principal	Meeting minutes evaluation by the Principal (or chairperson)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a more comprehensive analysis of cohort data (paragraph 1.4) 	To identify different cohorts to be analysed To allocate students into groups as per their course start and end dates Track retention and achievement data of cohorts	30 June 2014	Senior Administrator	Principal	Course Review Committee meeting minutes Student progression data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the accuracy of accreditation information (paragraph 3.6). 	Remove any ambiguous information from the website	To specify clearly that the College is not accredited by University of London for the LLB course, it is only a tuition centre	31 January 2014	Webmaster	Principal	Updated College website Lack of student complaints

						Regular checks by the Course Coordinator
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 College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce a College programme specification for the HND in Business (paragraph 1.6) 	Develop the programme specification handbook for the HND in Business	To assign this responsibility to the relevant course tutor	6 March 2014	HND Tutor	HND Course Coordinator	Course Review Committee meeting minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage further with the Quality Code (paragraph 1.7) 	Embed the Quality Code in all relevant policies and procedures	<p>To amend College policies and procedures, where appropriate</p> <p>To incorporate all elements of the Quality Code in the policies and procedures</p> <p>To provide staff with guidance and training on the Quality Code requirements</p>	30 June 2014	Principal, and Academic Consultant	Course Review Committee, Academic and Quality Assurance Committee, and Management Committee	<p>Revised college policy and procedures documents</p> <p>Academic and Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the presentation of the policies 	Produce a coherent teaching and learning incorporating all of the	To develop a single overarching teaching and learning policy	30 June 2014	Academic Consultant	Principal	Academic Quality Assurance

relating to teaching and learning (paragraph 2.2)	existing elements covering teaching and learning					Committee meeting minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen the link between appraisal of staff and their training and development (paragraph 2.5) 	Develop teachers' training and development action plan as a result of feedback from students and teaching observations	<p>To record the outcomes on teachers yearly appraisal forms</p> <p>To agree upon development objectives for all teachers</p>	15 December 2014	Principal	Course Review Committee, Academic and Quality Assurance Committee, and Management Committee	<p>Staff appraisal records</p> <p>Staff training and development records</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a publications policy (paragraph 3.3). 	Produce an overarching publication policy that covers all areas of information dissemination	To describe step by step the procedure and responsibilities related to dissemination of information (via electronic and/or print formats)	30 June 2014	Academic Consultant	Principal	Revised publication policy

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/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

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.

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 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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