College of Naturopathic Medicine Ltd

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

March 2014

Key findings about the College of Naturopathic Medicine Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in March 2014, 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.

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.

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 imaginative and comprehensive range of assessment methods (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:

- adopt an institutional framework to ensure a consistent approach to the management of academic procedures (paragraph 1.1)
- ensure that students have an appropriate and consistent level of language competence (paragraph 1.6)
- improve the consistency of internal verification and moderation processes across all programmes (paragraph 1.7)
- review its procedures for external examiner appointments with regard to the expectations of the Quality Code (paragraph 1.11)
- amend examination board procedures to facilitate more effective analysis of student progression (paragraph 1.12)
- review its methods of obtaining and analysing student programme feedback (paragraph 2.4)
- consider ways in which it can extend access to learning resources for students (paragraph 2.11).

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

- address the timing of, and interrelation between, committee meetings in order to enhance their effectiveness (paragraph 1.3)
- review the effectiveness of the student personal support systems (paragraph 2.8)
- further develop the student section of the College's website (paragraph 3.3)
- take action to control the use of social media (paragraph 3.4)
- check that teaching materials follow the referencing conventions stated in the College's Quality Assurance Manual (paragraph 3.6).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](1) (REO) conducted by [QAA](1) at the College of Naturopathic Medicine 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 its own. The review was carried out by Mr Gwynne Harries, Dr Linda Keen and Ms Francine Norris (reviewers) and Professor Nicholas Goddard (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 an extensive range of documentation supplied by the College prior to and at the visit. This included College regulations and policies, programme specifications, publicity material, appropriate statistical data, staff information and a range of assessed student work. The team also met groups of staff and students and a representative from one of the provider's accreditation associations. The team also referred to the QAA 2012 Review report and the Monitoring report of February 2013.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- Professional associations' frameworks and benchmarks.

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 founded in 1998 and is now the UK's leading dedicated provider of higher education in natural medicine. It provides specialist training in nutritional therapy, herbal medicine, acupuncture and homeopathy. The College's primary aim is to produce capable and well-trained professionals to support the continued development of natural medicines in the UK. Its mission is to produce professionals 'who incorporate a patient-centred approach to healthcare, have in-depth knowledge of the relevant health sciences within their chosen specialist subject; can integrate the principles of naturopathy; are safe, competent and know the limitations of their practice; have excellent reflective, interpersonal communication and practitioner skills; can identify their learning needs and act autonomously; can source, critically analyse and apply research evidence to support best practice'.

The College is based in modern premises in central London near Oxford Circus and has regional campuses in Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Edinburgh and Manchester. An administrative headquarters located at East Grinstead in Sussex services the entire organisation. For 2013-14 there were 1,575 higher education enrolments, the majority of which (1,473) were students studying part-time. There is one full-time member of academic staff and 73 part-time, including course directors and directors of study. These are supported by 19 full-time administrative staff.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, with student numbers in brackets:

- CNM Diploma in Acupuncture (33)
- CNM Diploma in Herbal Medicine (41)
- CNM Diploma in Naturopathic Principles/Study (249)

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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

- CNM Diploma in Naturopathic Nutrition (592)

In addition, there are 843 students studying a common first year in Biomedicine. The College hopes to resume recruitment to its Homeopathy Diploma in 2014. The College programmes are recognised and accredited by the following professional associations:

- Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine
- British Acupuncture Accreditation Board
- Association of Master Herbalists
- Homeopathic Medical Association
- Nutritional Therapy Council
- Association of Naturopathic Practitioners
- Naturopathic Nutrition Association

The team noted that these professional associations are not recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulations (Ofqual) and the judgements made in this report do not imply an endorsement of the credibility or validity of these associations in recognising the College programmes. Similarly the judgements in this report do not constitute an endorsement by the QAA or the team of the veracity or validity of any claims made for complementary or alternative medicines or therapies which are included in the programmes within the scope of the review.

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College takes entire responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic and professional standards, for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities and for the publication of information about its awards. In the development of its programmes and curricula and the benchmarking of professional standards, the College takes full account of the guidance and professional requirements of the associations specified above.

Recent developments

There has been a significant increase in student numbers at both the London centre and regional campuses with an associated increase in staffing. In London, additional teaching space has been taken at the Birkbeck University building. The College has continued to pursue validation agreements with awarding bodies without success but it has recently concluded an articulation agreement with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). This permits qualified college students to proceed to MSc programmes in Herbal Medicine, Homeopathy and Integrated Healthcare. Full accreditation has been awarded by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board for the Acupuncture Diploma, the Nutritional Therapy Council for the Nutrition diploma and the Association of Master Herbalists for the Herbal Medicine Diploma.

Students' contribution to the review

The College sent a questionnaire to all current UK students, distinguishing between London and the regional centres. Student representatives reviewed and reported on the statistics and further qualitative research. While the final report was produced by the Deputy Academic Director, its content was approved and endorsed by student representatives. In the course of the review the team met a representative group of students, including some attending the regional centres, and the record of this meeting forms an important source of evidence in supporting the findings of this report.

Detailed findings about the College of Naturopathic Medicine Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has developed a clear structure for allocating responsibilities for the management of its educational provision. The College awards its own Diploma qualifications, which are benchmarked to a range of external reference points including levels 4, 5 and 6 of *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) (see paragraph 1.8). Responsibility for academic standards lies with the Overall Academic Board under the leadership of the Academic Director. The responsibility for specific subject requirements is devolved to specialist programme boards and individual programme directors. There are differences in process and practice, which currently reflect the requirements of professional associations. It is **advisable** for the College to adopt an institutional framework to ensure a consistent approach to the management of academic procedures across its provision.

1.2 The quality assurance system is detailed in a comprehensive Handbook, which is overseen by a quality manager. This has been developed over a number of years and the key processes have recently been reviewed and strengthened. The annual quality cycle centres on a process of critical course review. The template for this is based on the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board requirements. This includes external examiners' reports and a summary of student feedback is to be adopted across all College provision from this year. A further recent initiative has been the collation of an overarching report by the Academic Director that identifies points for discussion and ongoing action by the Academic Board.

1.3 The College committee structure is clearly defined and consists of programme level boards that report to the Overall Academic Board. Meetings take place twice each year. Currently both meetings are scheduled to take place on the same day. Minutes indicate that the tracking of issues and actions between meetings is not always effective. Staff find that this arrangement makes it difficult to reflect fully and act upon issues raised. It would be **desirable** for the College to address the timing of, and interrelation between, committee meetings to enhance their effectiveness.

1.4 There is student representation on programme level boards but they do not attend the Overall Academic Board due to the reserved nature of business discussed. The College has recently identified the need to improve the quality of training for student representatives and to facilitate participation by part-time students in the quality process.

1.5 A rigorous staff appointment policy supports the maintenance of academic standards. Most staff are part-time and the College provides core teaching materials in the form of slide presentations that all staff are required to use to ensure consistency. This is effective in ensuring standardised curriculum coverage enabling students to move flexibly between sessions at different campuses.

1.6 Entry criteria are clearly set out in College publicity material and in programme specifications. All students are interviewed before acceptance and students without previous clinical qualifications are required to undertake a Foundation Programme in Biomedicine either alongside or prior to their chosen programme. The team found that formal qualifications in English language were not routinely checked and that some students experienced difficulty with the specialist language used. This has the potential to limit the

overall effectiveness of the tuition. It is **advisable** for the College to ensure that students have an appropriate and consistent level of language competence.

1.7   Each Course Director takes responsibility for ensuring that assessment tasks and examination papers are set at an appropriate level. In some areas this is carried out in consultation with the external examiner but, in others, there are no specified procedures. There are clear assessment procedures including marking criteria set out in the Quality Handbook and a single Assessment Board where all results are presented. However, while the College programmes follow the procedures specified by its professional associations this leads to inconsistency in practice between programmes in such matters as external examining. For example, in second marking some programmes sample across the entire mark range while others second mark fail grades only. There is no systematic internal moderation process across the provision and students raised concerns about consistency of assessment and marking. It is **advisable** that the College improves the consistency of internal verification and moderation practices across all programmes.

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

1.8   The College's diploma qualifications are designed with reference to a range of relevant external reference points. They are benchmarked to level statements within *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards* of the Quality Code. Programme specifications clearly indicate the level of the course while additional guides effectively set out the level, learning hours and credit value of individual units. The Quality Handbook includes clear and concise descriptors of teaching and assessment strategies at each level of the courses offered. The existence of the articulation agreement with UCLAN, where students can proceed directly to an MSc, confirms that the College provision is delivered to a level 6 standard**.**

1.9   The College makes rigorous use of subject benchmarks and National Occupational Standards to ensure students develop professional competencies and clinical practice when dealing with clients. Student and clinical handbooks set out the standards of professional conduct that are required of both students and staff at the College.

1.10   The College takes into account the requirements of various relevant accreditation associations in designing its programmes. Details of specific accreditations and alignments are set out in the programme specifications for each award. The levels of engagement with these associations vary in relation to the requirements for recognition or accreditation with the most rigorous requiring evidence of sustained good practice and enhancement over a number of years.

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

1.11   The College is currently taking action to ensure a consistent approach in the use of external examiners across all programmes. In acupuncture external examining has been in place for some years and good practice from this area is being used to inform the development of the college-wide policy. Currently there are two external examiners for acupuncture in line with accrediting association requirements and one each for herbal medicine and nutrition. A process for the appointment of external examiners is set out in the Quality Handbook and this includes criteria for preventing conflicts of interest. Appointments are approved by the Academic Director but nominations are not currently scrutinised by a wider group or committee. A role descriptor makes clear the responsibilities of external examiners in the assessment process and this is given to new external examiners as part of the induction. The team found that in practice there was some variation in the way individual external examiners engaged with programmes. It is **advisable** that the College reviews its

current practice in respect of the appointment of external examiners with regard to the expectations of the Quality Code.

1.12   Examination board terms of reference are insufficiently developed to capture effective recording and assessment of student progression. External examiner reports recommend the adoption of course spread sheets, to include individual assessment weighting and marking reports which summarise cohort performance. Such practices would enable more extensive analysis of student achievement across programmes and regional centres and provide a structured basis for programme reviews. It is **advisable** for the College to amend examination board procedures to ensure more effective and extensive analysis of student progression.

1.13   The College has developed an effective template for external examiner reports, which is being used across the provision. Commentary in reports seen by the team demonstrates that external examiners have a robust engagement with the College. Issues raised in reports have previously been reported directly to the Overall Academic Board but will, from this year, be included in the annual critical course review process in order to encourage an integrated overview of performance. Teaching staff and student representatives are made aware of the content of reports through the Programme Board meetings.

1.14   The team found that although the College awards its own Diploma qualifications without the comprehensive oversight of an external validating body or organisation, there is evidence of sufficient and adequate procedures for the management of academic standards. Proactive leadership by the College to establish best practice and to ensure consistency across the provision would further secure this. External reference points and an external examiner system are used to benchmark the level of awards and monitor their professional currency.

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

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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 quality assurance systems reviewed in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4 have recently been updated to improve their effectiveness for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. The College has clarified procedures for adding staff and student input into the enhanced quality cycle.

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

2.2   The College is making increased use of the Quality Code to strengthen quality assurance systems; progress has been made in mapping teaching and learning provision against the Quality Code, with completion planned by the end of 2014. Training has been provided for staff to develop awareness of the Quality Code. This has been only been partially completed and is not yet embedded in staff practice. Programme design and delivery is rigorously mapped against the benchmarking requirements of the relevant professional associations.

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

2.3   The College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy specifies clear procedures for the annual update of teaching materials such as unit guides and programme specifications. Paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4 review the processes used for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning opportunities, including critical course reviews and meetings. The results of these are analysed at the Overall Academic Board meeting.

2.4   In response to student feedback, the College has recently improved the systems for student evaluation and engagement. A comprehensive range of methods to capture the student voice includes a complaints procedure, course evaluation questionnaires, client feedback on clinical sessions and a student website 'Open Comments and Suggestions Questionnaire'. A structured form enables staff to analyse and act on course evaluation questionnaire results, which are then fed into the quality review processes. However, the questionnaires do not use sufficiently specific individual questions on the effectiveness of library provision, or satisfaction with assessment processes and also include a number of leading questions. Questionnaire score results are not aggregated, which limits thorough evaluation. It is **advisable** for the College to review its methods of obtaining and analysing student programme feedback.

2.5   Clearly specified formative and summative assessment processes demonstrate an imaginative and comprehensive range of methods and marking schemes which is an example of **good practice**. These are explicitly provided for students within the Unit Guides and Assessment Overviews at the beginning of each course to facilitate student management of their learning activities. Comprehensive instructions, including suggested reading, are provided for students. These include clear statements of assessment objectives and expected learning outcomes together with marking criteria, matrices and structured forms for providing feedback. Written guidelines for supervision and procedures for dissertations are effective.

2.6   Apart from some concerns about the variability of standards across programmes, student evaluation and external examiner reports reveal generally positive views about the quality of teaching and learning. Issues raised include some reports of limited feedback, instances of inconsistent marking and, in one unit, standards of expectation. In some cases there was also a lack of student understanding of marking schemes, despite the information provided in course guidelines, and confusion about the time frame for the return of assessed work. In the absence of a coherent college-wide system of internal moderation or double marking, there is currently no systematic method for identifying and addressing these inconsistencies (see paragraph 1.7).

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

2.7   The Student Handbook provides detailed information about academic and personal support systems. Help with academic problems is available from course lecturers and assistance with personal problems from the Director of Studies. The College presented some excellent examples of reflective learning portfolios, which record and review each student's academic, clinical and personal learning progress and development. However, these systems did not operate across all courses for the first year of study. Student feedback indicated support for a more coherent and regular review of individual learning progress and learning development plans.

2.8   Students assess the effectiveness of student support provision through the student unit evaluations, which are then fed into the general evaluation process. Students expressed generally positive views about levels of academic support, but were less satisfied with individual pastoral support. Currently there is no college-wide system for allocating personal

tutors, although the College is considering the introduction of a more systematic student tutorial support system. It would be **desirable** for the College to review the effectiveness of its student personal support systems.

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

2.9   The Staff recruitment and selection policies include robust systems for specifying and assessing staff competences, and providing full induction for new staff members. As most staff are part-time, they rely on extensive use of electronic communication to ensure regular liaison; staff employment contracts also include the allocation of specific hours for staff to attend meetings and training events.

2.10   In accordance with the Staff Development Policy, the College adopts a wide variety of rigorously implemented procedures for identifying and reviewing staff development needs through individual personal development plans. These measures include staff appraisal systems, teaching observation, self-evaluation forms, and continual professional development activities, some of which are based on the requirements of professional associations. The College provides various training events from time to time. The effectiveness of these development initiatives will be reviewed on an annual basis from 2014-15, but, as yet, there is no formal College staff development plan or budget allocation to meet staff development needs, or provide staff with teaching qualification.

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

2.11   Access to learning resources is informally reviewed and assessed as part of the various course and student evaluation and engagement mechanisms reviewed in paragraph 2.5. However, apart from a list of particular items identified in the College Business Plan there is no learning resource strategy. There is also no dedicated study area and only limited computer provision. Students are allowed to use any available rooms for independent study. However, no provision is made for general student access to the Internet which means they are unable to access the student section of the website and the learning support materials. Student feedback identifies difficulties in accessing academic research databases, concerns about the size of the library and the absence of wireless computer access in the College. It is **advisable** that the College consider ways in which it can extend access to learning resources for students.

2.12   The review team concluded that there is evidence of sufficient and adequate systems for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. Initiatives to improve the effectiveness of examination board procedures, and student course evaluation systems would further enhance the quality of teaching and learning provision. There is also a need to improve the quality and range of learning resources.

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

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3   Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1   The College provides information about learning opportunities in an appropriate variety of ways. These include the website, the student closed section of the website and the printed material issued to staff and students. The College also issues printed leaflets and documentation.

3.2   The College website is a helpful source of information. It functions in part as a prospectus, augmenting hard copy documentation and presenting further information on programmes, admissions and College facilities. Students confirmed that they used the website prior to application and had found it helpful and accurate. The website provides information on a range of topics relevant to both prospective and current students, including fees and policies as well as access to handbooks. The College has now clarified that the awards they make are the College's awards and not externally accredited. The home page of the student section of the website has recently been updated and while there is a link to access the previous version, some of the pages in the new version have yet to be populated.

3.3   However, at this early stage of development the College website does not provide access to all College policies, supplementary reading materials uploaded by staff, academic committee minutes or external examiner reports. At present, while some lecture notes and assignment briefs have been uploaded, the staff use of the website is not consistent across all units. It would be **desirable** for the College to continue to develop the student section of the website in line with the College's stated objectives.

3.4   At present, there is no formal policy on published information, although there is reference to it contained in the College's Quality Assurance Manual. This can lead to confusion about how the College manages all its information in a structured and productive way. One such example is the way the College provides details of its use of social media on its printed documentation and although the student section of the website has a 'blogging' section, this has not been actively used. Many students have created and prefer to use closed contact groups for their own benefit that are not operated by the College but which do have a college identity. This has the potential to jeopardise the integrity of College information and identity. It would be **desirable** for the College to take action to control the use of social media while supporting its popular use.

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

3.5   The College continues to maintain an effective system of ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information. The Operations Officer, who also works as Personal Assistant to the Principal, drafts changes and these are then checked by the Public Relations manager for accuracy and compliance of wording. The final sign-off of published information lies with the Principal. Through their relationship with external associations, both professional and by way of accreditation, the College ensures that the information provided has currency.

3.6   The College process for checking information at unit level has been less successful. For example, on the new student website, some of the teaching materials have content that is not referenced. This is contrary to the requirements for submission of student work as detailed in the Quality Assurance Manual and is therefore not demonstrating consistent practice. It would be **desirable** for the College to check that teaching materials follow the referencing conventions stated in the Quality Assurance Manual.

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

Action plan[3]

College of Naturopathic Medicine Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of March 2014						
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:						
• the imaginative and comprehensive range of assessment methods (paragraph 2.5).	Improve methods for identifying and addressing marking inconsistencies	Markers given access to samples of Top-Middle-Bottom folders for the previous year as a reference point	1 Jul 2014	Markers	Course Directors	Improved marking consistency feedback from Course Directors and students
	Lack of student understanding of marking schemes, Reduce confusion about the time frame for the return of assessed work	Average marks spreadsheet (by College) made available to Course Directors to aid identification of marking inconsistencies	1 Jul 2014	Student Services Administrator	Course Directors	Improved marking consistency feedback from Course Directors and students
		Review of Biomedicine marking undertaken to bring into line with the marking guidelines used	Start of 2015 academic year	Biomedicine Course Director	Academic Director	Improved marking consistency feedback from Course Directors

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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.

			Target			
		by the specialisms				and students
		Assignment deadlines and marking schemes displayed on student website	Start of 2015 academic year	Information Technology Systems Coordinator	Course Directors	Student website review
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:						
• adopt an institutional framework to ensure a consistent approach to the management of academic procedures (paragraph 1.1)	Find a balance to incorporate best practice and minimise diversity in overall academic framework across specialist subjects (caused over time by the specialist subject external accrediting bodies making different recommendations)	Course Directors to forward to the Academic Director summary of external accreditation body action points	Annually on 1 Jul	Course Directors	Academic Director	Specialist subject external assessment body reports
		The Academic Director to review all external accreditation action points and agree with management those to be applied across all subjects	Annually on 31 Aug	Academic Director	Managing Director and Principal	Email confirmation of actions agreed between Academic Director and Management
		At the Overall Academic Board each September the Academic Director will brief Course Directors on enhancements to be introduced across all subjects	Annually in Sept	Academic Director	Overall Academic Board members	Academic Board minutes

• ensure that students have an appropriate and consistent level of language competence (paragraph 1.6)	To consistently screen applicants for adequacy in English language skills	Course Consultants to be rebriefed to ensure the existing language screening process is consistently applied	June 2014	Managing Director	Quality Coordinator	Student and teaching staff feedback mechanisms
• improve the consistency of internal verification and moderation processes across all programmes (paragraph 1.7)	Minimise diversity in the verification and moderation processes across specialist subjects	i) A second exam board set up to cover Biomedicine Nutrition and Naturopathy ii) Review current diversity with aim to achieving a more consistent and systematic approach to second marking and moderation	Sept 2014 Sept 2014	Education-alist Academic Director together with the Managing Director	Managing Director Principal	Exam Board minutes Confirmation of agreement reached between Academic Director and management
• review its procedures for external examiner appointments with regard to the expectations of the Quality Code (paragraph 1.11)	Appointment of external examiners to be aligned with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) i) Appointments scrutinised by a wider group or committee ii make external examiners identity available to students along with summary of findings	i) External examiner curricula vitae circulated to relevant Course Directors, Academic Director and Principal ii) External examiners identified in Academic Director's Report summarising input from external examiners - submitted to Head Office for uploading to the student website	From 1 June 2014 Annually following the September 2014 Overall Academic Board Meeting	Academic Director and Course Director Academic Director	Managing Director and Principal Managing Director	Email confirmation of circulation Student website

| amend examination board procedures to facilitate more effective analysis of student progression (paragraph 1.12) | Capture more effective recording and assessment of student progression to allow scrutiny at individual, cohort and regional levels | Develop tools for effective record and review of student progression - consider ability to view assessment weighting and marking reports which summarise cohort performance

Also to enable analysis of student achievement across programmes and regions, as input to academic reviews | Completion for the 2014-15 academic year | Managing Director Education-alist Information Technology Systems Coordinator | Managing Director and Principal | Record of data captured, analysed and used |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • review its methods of obtaining and analysing student programme feedback (paragraph 2.4) | Methods of obtaining and analysing student and programme feedback improved to allow data aggregation, review and evaluation | Consider moving student feedback onto electronic data capture, with reporting function by cohort, programme and region - and incorporating following QAA suggestions:

i) reword leading questions currently on the paper version

ii) satisfaction with assessment processes

iii) satisfaction with library facilities | For 2014-15 academic year | Managing Director Education-alist and Information Technology Systems Coordinator | Principal | Data reports evidence at QAA review visit in 2015 |
| • consider ways in which it can extend access | Find more study spaces for students, before relocating to new | 2014-15 increasing study space, using available dedicated mid-week | Start of 2014-15 academic year | Managing Director | Principal | Student and teaching staff feedback |

| to learning resources for students (paragraph 2.11). | premises (planned for 2015)

Plan adequate learning resources in new premises and build into Business Planning process | classroom space

2015-16 Business Plan for new premises to include a learning resources strategy/plan/budget, and also specifically address the following points raised by QAA:

i)   student study area(s)
ii) computer provision
iii) access to the internet to access student website material
iv) access to academic research databases | Start of 2015-16 academic year | | | mechanisms |

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:						
• address the timing of, and interrelation between, committee meetings in order to enhance their effectiveness (paragraph 1.3)	Enhance effectiveness of the interrelation between academic committee meetings	Consider timing of, and interrelation between the academic board meetings to enhance their effectiveness	30 June 2014	Academic Director	Principal and Managing Director	Meeting minutes

• review the effectiveness of the student personal support systems (paragraph 2.8)	A more systematic student tutorial support system that students regard as an improvement	Review ways to roll-out tutorial support systems that are: i) efficient and practical ii) gain positive student feedback iii) more consistent across subjects	By start 2014-15 academic year	Academic Director, and Course Directors	Principal and Managing Director	Improved student satisfaction QAA review visit (March 2015) finding improved student satisfaction
• further develop the student section of the College website (paragraph 3.3)	Continue to develop the student website to contain all materials needed by students	Student website to provide access to the following: i) all College policies ii) supplementary reading materials uploaded by staff iii) student representative meeting reports iv) external examiner reports	By start 2014-15 academic year	Information Technology Systems Managing Director and teaching staff	Principal	Student feedback QAA assessment visit (March 2015) finding improved student satisfaction with the student website
• take action to control the use of social media (paragraph 3.4)	The College adheres to QAA's recommendation - to control the use of the College's identity on all social media sites, groups or forums	Meet with group of student representatives to explain: i) students reported to QAA they are using College branding to create closed social media groups which are outside the control of the organisation ii) QAA have suggested that to avoid potential to	01 July 2014	Academic Director and Managing Director	Principal	Head Office controls Student feedback QAA assessment visit (March 2015)

		jeopardise the integrity of college information or the college identity, all externally published information (including via social media) that makes any reference to the brand names CNM or the College of Naturopathic Medicine Ltd should be under the control of the organisation iii) this does not stop the college encouraging the use of social media forums, and providing students with platform to do so				
• check that teaching materials follow the referencing conventions stated in the College Quality Assurance Manual (paragraph 3.6).	All teaching materials to be referenced in line with the requirements put upon student work	New and existing teaching materials (including some already appearing on the new student website) to be checked to ensure referencing conventions are followed, as stated in the Quality Assurance Manual	Start of 2014-15 academic year	All Course Directors	Managing Director	QAA review visit (March 2015) finding improved student feedback regarding the student website

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**.