Bradford College of Management Ltd

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

March 2014

Key findings about Bradford College of Management 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 on behalf of Pearson and ATHE Ltd.

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:

- improve its academic committee structures to clearly identify functions and reporting lines (paragraph 1.1)
- implement a more robust and systematic process for annual monitoring, evaluation and review of its programmes (paragraph 1.2)
- develop more detailed and comprehensive analyses of cohort data (paragraph 1.3)
- review and systematically act on outcomes from external verification at College level (paragraph 1.7).

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

- consider student representation on its management committees (paragraph 1.4)
- increase further staff engagement with the Quality Code (paragraph 1.5)
- review and revise its policies and documentation relating to quality assurance (paragraph 2.1)
- undertake an evaluation of recently introduced procedures relating to accuracy of information (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Review for Educational Oversight[1] (REO) conducted by QAA at Bradford College of Management Ltd (the College) which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of ATHE Ltd and Pearson. The review was carried out by Mr Peter Green, Mr Gary Hargreaves, Mrs Pat Millner (reviewers) and Mrs Brenda Hodgkinson (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 copies of policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, awarding organisation reports, a QAA REO report, teaching materials, staff and student handbooks, the College website and meetings with staff and students.

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)
- 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 is a private college established in November 2009. It was subject to an REO visit in January 2012. A follow-up monitoring visit took place in March 2013 and a further monitoring visit was due in early in 2014. As there had been a change of ownership and a new Principal, a full review has been undertaken in accordance with the procedures. At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations with student numbers in brackets:

Pearson

Level 7 BTEC Extended Diploma in Strategic Management & Leadership (35)
Level 4 BTEC HNC in Business (12)
Level 5 BTEC HND in Business (40)
Level 4 BTEC HNC in Computing and Systems Development (1)
Level 5 BTEC HND in Computing and Systems Development (11)

ATHE Ltd

Level 4 Extended Diploma in Management (7)
Level 5 Extended Diploma in Management (23)
Level 5 Extended Diploma in Management for Health and Social Care (10)
Level 6 Diploma in Health Care management (15)
Level 6 Diploma in Management (96)
Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management (8)
Level 7 Diploma in Health Care Management (35)

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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

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College's responsibilities are stipulated by the awarding organisations. Both the awarding organisations provide the curriculum framework and programme specifications. The College is responsible for recruitment of students, learning and teaching, student support and learning resources. For ATHE Ltd's programmes, the awarding organisation retains responsibility for setting assessments. Setting assessments is a shared responsibility with Pearson, first marking and internal verification taking place at the College followed by external verification by the awarding organisation. The College has responsibility for monitoring the quality of higher education and teaching.

Recent developments

The College applied for accreditation with ATHE Ltd in 2012 and commenced delivery of programmes in January 2013. Ownership of the College changed in April 2013 and a new Principal was appointed in January 2014. There has been an increase in the numbers of students applying since April 2013 and at the time of the review 293 students were registered at the College.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider met the coordinator on the day of the preparatory meeting to discuss the Review of Educational Oversight process. On the first day of the review the review team met students and had a useful discussion on their experience at the College.

Detailed findings about Bradford College of Management Ltd

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The College has an appropriate management structure for the oversight of its higher education provision. The new Director took over in April 2013 and appointed a new Principal and a Director of Studies in January 2014. The College organisational chart identifies its structure and reporting relationships. The College Management Committee is chaired by the Director and deals with both academic and non-academic matters. The Principal chairs the Examinations Committee and has oversight of assessment. Heads of department are responsible for the operation of programmes but do not have a role in overall quality monitoring. Other academic decisions are made through teachers' meetings and staff meetings. However, the committee structure does not provide meaningful reporting relationships and the committees lack clarity of purpose. Minutes are produced. However, the setting of agendas, timing of meetings and functional action planning through the committee structure is inconsistent and lacks continuity. It is **advisable** that the College improves its academic committee structures to clearly identify functions and reporting lines.

1.2   Since the change of ownership, the College has not effectively conducted programme annual monitoring review. A new report template was developed after the last QAA review visit and used for annual monitoring for the academic year 2011-12. No reports were completed for the year 2012-13. At that time neither the current Management Team nor academic staff were engaged at the College. The Principal confirmed that an ad hoc review had been undertaken through a series of informal meetings. The College has a Quality Assurance Manual with some sections relevant to the management of quality and a small section on annual monitoring, but this section has not been followed during 2012-13. Staff confirmed that they carry out their own end-of-module evaluations, but these have not been collated across programmes. It is **advisable** that the College implement a more robust and systematic process for annual monitoring, evaluation and review of its programmes.

1.3   The scrutiny by the management of student data is unclear. Student progression and completion is not analysed to clearly identify student achievement either individually or across a cohort. As noted in paragraph 1.2, the College needs to strengthen its annual monitoring and consideration of such data is an important feature of this process in order to inform academic standards and the quality of its learning opportunities. The College has also been criticised by Pearson for not registering a number of students on the programme. It is **advisable** that the College develops more detailed and comprehensive analyses of cohort data.

1.4   The College has student representatives and a formal Student Council chaired by the Welfare Officer. Students confirmed that issues raised at the Student Council are actioned and that they receive feedback. However, there is no student representation on any of the management committees, thus minimising the student voice. Students reported good rapport with staff and the College has an established record of student engagement. In order to continue this good practice it would be **desirable** for the College to consider student representation on its management committees.

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

1.5   Engagement with external reference points is largely determined through the relationship with the awarding organisations. Programme specifications are provided by ATHE Ltd and these reflect the appropriate subject benchmark statements, professional organisation standards and codes of practice. The College has developed defined programme specifications that contain the minimum requirements expected by Pearson. The College's new Quality Assurance Manual has been developed in close alignment to the Quality Code. However, staff awareness of the contents of the Quality Code is limited. It would be **desirable** for the College to increase further staff engagement with the Quality Code.

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

1.6   The College has a substantial level of autonomy over assessment of its programmes. All student assignments are internally verified. Tutor assessment grades are standardised and approved by the heads of department who are trained as internal verifiers. The Director of Studies (Principal), acting as the lead verifier, oversees all internal verification.

1.7   External verifiers are appointed to all taught programmes approved by Pearson External verifiers report good development and improvement. ATHE Ltd has undertaken a satisfactory health check of College delivery of its programmes. Improvements to the quality of outcomes are noted in the Pearson external verification report. The outcomes from external verification activity have been discussed at teachers' meetings and actions reported to the Complaints Committee. However, as noted at paragraph 1.2, the College has not undertaken a formal review of its recent external verification reports through an annual monitoring process. It is **advisable** that the College reviews and systematically acts on outcomes from external verification at College level.

1.8   The team concludes that the College has effective mechanisms in place for managing its responsibilities for delivering academic standards. However, due to the change in management personnel, annual monitoring has not been formally implemented for the academic year 2012-13. The current management acknowledges this omission and recognises that annual monitoring needs strengthening and formally employed. Monitoring is only effective with the use of accurate and comprehensive data analyses and effective scrutiny of the outcomes of external verification. The review team considers that this requires further implementation by the College. The Quality Assurance Manual sets out a reporting structure but clarification of the committee terms of reference and reporting mechanisms should ensure continuing maintenance of academic standards. The College has a record of good student engagement. Student involvement in management committees would further build this commitment.

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

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The College's management of its responsibilities relating to the quality of learning opportunities replicate those set out in paragraph 1.1. The College has responsibility for all aspects of student recruitment, learning resources, welfare and the delivery and support of the curriculum. Policies and procedures have been designed in accordance with the Quality Code, the requirements of awarding organisations and external examiners' comments. There is a version control procedure for policies. Documents are headed with the version number and the date for future review. In addition, revisions to programme handbooks are made clear and circulated to the appropriate staff. However, due to recent management and ownership changes some of the policy revisions have yet to be implemented. In addition, there is duplication within the policies and procedures that impedes effective management of learning opportunities. For example, there are four documents dealing with the assignment process and three documents for student induction. The excellent progress made in producing the comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual needs to be continued to ensure policies and strategies are integrated or clearly signposted in the handbook. To remove duplication and ensure coherence it would be **desirable** for the College to review and revise its policies and documentation relating to quality assurance.

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

2.2   As noted in paragraph 1.5, the Quality Assurance Manual reflects the Quality Code, but staff appreciation of how the Quality Code impacts on the enhancement of learning opportunities is not explicit and requires further development.

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

2.3   The College has suitable processes for establishing and ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained. The Teaching and Learning Strategy, within the College's Strategic Plan, sets out its commitment to strengthen its academic profile. The Quality Assurance Manual describes more fully the College's approach to provide a supportive yet challenging environment reflecting the needs of the diverse student body.

2.4   The College's policy for the recruitment of staff requires staff to hold appropriate qualifications and to have or be undertaking a teaching certificate. Curriculum vitae of staff demonstrate that most staff hold postgraduate and teaching qualifications and some have considerable professional experience. There is a useful induction process for newly employed staff that includes the provision and explanation of the Staff Handbook and the Quality Assurance Manual. Although there is no formal mentor for new staff, the tutors work closely as a team to share practice and discuss curriculum issues. For example, there has been a recent staff room debate on how to develop better spoken and written English among the mainly international student groups. Teacher meetings are valuable opportunities to share ideas, and attendance is a requirement. The termly managerial teaching observations, peer reviews and student feedback questionnaires provide useful information for assuring teaching and learning standards. The concept of the Learning and Development Unit to support staff development for innovative teaching and learning and use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) is currently aspirational.

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

2.5   The College has formal working policies and procedures along with satisfactory informal practices to support students. The Director is responsible for admissions. This involves careful checking of entry criteria and the equivalence of UK qualifications against international awards. Students receive a useful and thorough induction during which they are informed of the programme calendar and content. They are given a Student Handbook that informs them of student policies and assessment regulations. Students also receive informative documents such as the Induction Handbook and Induction Pack, although there is duplication of information across these booklets and the Student Handbook. The induction process also provides a brief introduction to study skills, for example the referencing convention. Thereafter academic skills development is integrated into the curriculum and delivered as appropriate when assignments are distributed.

2.6   There is a comprehensive Disability Policy. Students are able to declare the need for additional support pre-entry, at induction or at any time during their programme. Where a student has stated a particular need, staff support the student and ensure information is communicated appropriately. For example, ensuring the arrangement of the seating in class allowed a student with hearing loss to be accommodated. There is a newly appointed Welfare Officer who provides pastoral support that students find accessible and helpful.

2.7   Assessment feedback is generally constructive. Students reported that feedback is provided in a timely way so that it can be used to improve subsequent assignments. There is no formal tutorial policy but students are fully aware that they are able to make appointments to see a tutor individually for advice on preparing assignments or verbal assessment feedback. The College facilitates this by timetabling the last hour of the working day for tutorial support. Students are also appreciative of the informal communications with staff, including the open-door policy of the Principal and Director.

2.8   Student feedback is obtained through a variety of methods, including student representatives on the Student Council, the complaints procedure and student questionnaires. Although used in previous annual monitoring, as noted in paragraph 1.2, this has not been formally evaluated for 2012-13 and as the process is implemented this information to evaluate the adequacy and quality of its support mechanisms should become more effective.

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

2.9   The College is effective in providing staff with opportunities to enhance their knowledge, expertise and skills. There is a policy for annual staff appraisal through which continuing professional development requirements can be identified. Staff self-certify recent continuing professional development activities at appraisal. It is clear from staff records that a number of the teaching staff are pursuing further qualifications in teaching or higher and doctoral degrees. The College has given financial support in the past for staff to study for further qualifications. The College is responsive to needs presented in the delivery of particular courses, for example it has facilitated ATHE Ltd training. Teachers' meetings may take the form of staff development events and address matters raised in external verification reports, for example, the marking, standardisation and feedback to students. The Principal undertakes formal staff class observations and peer review is organised by staff informally to share good practice and current pedagogy.

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   The College has suitable measures in place to assess and monitor the adequacy of the learning resources available to students. As part of programme approval, the Director and Principal confirm that appropriate staffing, facilities and resources are available to support programmes. The College employs teaching staff as visiting lecturers and is therefore able to respond promptly to changes in student numbers. The Management Committee uses student feedback from questionnaires and representatives, and complaints and external examiner comments to check learning resources provision. Students use the College's small library and the nearby public library to access programme texts. They also make extensive use of online materials and learning resources on the College's VLE. Students confirm that they have enough access to learning resources to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The College management responds positively to requests for particular texts identified by students. Students have raised the issue of the variability in the quality of wireless connections and a review is in hand.

2.11   The College also assures the quality of the information technology infrastructure and hardware by employing an external consultant. The capacity of the comfortable, appropriately equipped teaching spaces and social area is sufficient for current student numbers. There are three computer rooms with sufficient machines and appropriate software.

2.12   The team concludes that the College has procedures and practices in place for assuring the quality of its learning opportunities. The documentation setting out these procedures could be more coherent. However, the College is committed and has the ability to identify and address any situation that threatens the quality of student learning opportunities. Staff and students are supported appropriately. Learning resources are adequate and students report that the College is responsive to their requests and needs.

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 effectively communicates information to potential and current students. The majority of information is made accessible through the College website. Students confirmed that the College website is very useful for making choices and provides an accurate reflection of the programmes offered by the College. Relevant College policies are accessible through the website as well as a comprehensive overview of studying in the UK with guidance on the locality, accommodation and transport links. The awarding organisations allow the College to use their programme information and logos and the website summarises the structure of each programme.

3.2   The College uses its VLE to provide students with a comprehensive set of course information and materials. VLE induction is available to staff and students. Staff are able to upload teaching materials to the VLE for students. Students were positive about the availability and usefulness of the VLE for enhancing and supporting their learning. Staff have

their own separate electronic portal where staff handbooks, polices and students records are held.

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

3.3   The website, VLE and the information management system are managed externally by a private company under instruction from the Principal and the Director. A separate external consultant is regularly onsite with responsibilities for information technology support and taking informal feedback from both staff and students for management of electronic media. The College also uses social media and this is monitored by the external information technology consultant and the Principal, on a daily basis. The new Principal recently identified some areas for improving and formalising the implementation of changes to the website and the VLE. He has introduced reporting procedures to collect possible changes through student feedback and the identification of potential inaccuracies from staff. It is too soon to measure the effectiveness of these procedures. It would be **desirable** for the College to undertake an evaluation of recently introduced procedures relating to accuracy of information.

3.4   The team concludes that the College recognises the information it is responsible for publishing and employs mechanisms through internal and external review to ensure the information is accurate and complete. The new Principal has introduced new mechanisms to further formalise and collect feedback, the impact of these new mechanisms is yet to be assessed.

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]

Bradford College of Management Ltd: action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of March 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:						
• improve its academic committee structures to clearly identify functions and reporting lines (paragraph 1.1)	Introduction of an independent Academic Board with structures reporting to the Managing Director Clear terms of reference for the overall management and governance	An independent Academic Board is to be discussed at Management Committee meetings All actions and responses are reviewed and updated	September 2014	Managing Director and Principal	Management Committee	Academic Board approval policies and procedures Academic Board meeting minutes
		Ensure the Academic Board undergoes approval Create clear management structure diagram with reporting mechanisms	Immediately	Principal	Senior Management Team	Management Committee meeting minutes Governance reporting structures Quality Manual 2014-15

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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.

• implement a more robust and systematic process for annual monitoring, evaluation and review of its programmes (paragraph 1.2)	Introduction of a more reliable method for the systematic collection of data on student retention, academic standing, and achievement to inform the strategic and operational management of the provision for annual monitoring, evaluation and the annual report	Develop and implement new systems of data compilation and analysis	October 2014 to be implemented by December 2014	Director of Studies and Managing Director	Senior Management Team	Student data and analysis
		Termly data updates of data records	From January 2014, third month of each term	Senior Management Team	Principal and Director of Studies	Data returns
		Collection, analysis and monitoring of data returns	Annually from September 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Senior Management Team	Management team meetings
		Annual data returns produced and shared with heads of department, but includes specific areas highlighted by QAA and responses to actions	Annually from September 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Management Committee Team	Management Committee meeting minutes Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Review report
• develop more detailed and comprehensive analyses of cohort data (paragraph 1.3)	Coherent, comprehensive and accurate student data on retention, academic standing and achievement	Termly data updates of data records	October 2014 to be implemented by December 2014	Managing Director	Director of Studies	Annual monitoring reports Management team meetings
	Student retention of 90 per cent or higher	Annual monitoring process takes due account of	From January 2014, third	Managing Director	Director of Studies	Data return

		essential data	month of each term			
			Annually from September 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Senior Management Team	Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Review report
• review and systematically act on outcomes from external verification at College level (paragraph 1.7).	The development and embedding of a robust approach to dealing with outcomes from external verifications	In consultation with Academic Board and Senior Management Team, establish a panel to investigate the outcomes from external verifications and make recommendations for actions to be implemented by the Academic Board	At least once a year - July 2014	Academic Board	Senior Management Team	Panel Report Academic Board meeting minutes
	Effective processes are in place to approve and periodically review the relevance of recommendations for actions to be implemented	Ensure all recommendations are taken on board and undergo approval by the Academic Board	At least once a year - July 2014	Heads of department and Academic Board	Management Committee	Management Committee meeting minutes
		Ensure all approved recommendations are implemented and monitored by the Director of Studies	At least twice a year (June-July) 2014 and (December-January) 2015	Heads of department and Principal	Principal and Director of Studies	Teacher and staff meeting minutes

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:						
• consider student representation on its management committees (paragraph 1.4)	Student Involvement Policy is approved and implemented through an action plan so that students represent themselves effectively on the Management Committee meetings and in other meetings	Develop and approve Student Involvement Policy	From May-July 2014	Student Welfare Officer	Student Council	Student Involvement Policy, Vision and Action Plan
		Create a student involvement action plan	From May-July 2014	Student Council and Student Welfare Officer	Principal	Annual student review report
	Ensure that students are involved in the decision-making process of the College and inform its strategic direction and business plan	Students are represented at Management Committee meetings	From May 2014	Student Welfare Officer and Student Council	Principal	Management Committee meeting minutes
		Provide a wide range of opportunities for students to volunteer to get involved in College activities, including ambassadorial roles, peer mentoring, leading enrichment programmes and student representation through the Student Council	Immediately	Student Welfare Officer	Principal and Director of Studies	Annual student review report Notes from meetings between heads of department and Director of Studies

• increase further staff engagement with the Quality Code (paragraph 1.5)	The College to ensure that staff have access to training and ongoing support to equip them to fulfil their roles in educational enhancement and quality assurance effectively	In consultation with the Quality Control Manager, training to be organised for staff to engage with the Quality Code	From October 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Senior Management Team Management Committee meeting	Training reports Management Committee meeting minutes
		Training provision for staff	From October 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Management Committee meeting	Annual Monitoring and Review Report
		Data return of staff training for annual monitoring return to QAA	From November 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Management Committee meeting	Staff meeting minutes
• review and revise its policies and documentation relating to quality assurance (paragraph 2.1)	The Quality Manual 2014 revised primarily to change the management structures Upgrade manual including contents page, to encompass the requirements of the recent QAA review report and updated policies and changes that have occurred during the review period: Academic Board Policy and Procedures, Student Involvement Policy and Vision and Action Plan	Upgraded Quality Manual 2014 Revision of policies and added policy statement	From June 2014-Dec 2014 From June 2014	Principal and Director of Studies Principal and Director of Studies	Management Committee Meetings Senior Management Team	Revised Quality Assurance Manual 2014-15 Management Committee meeting minutes

• undertake an evaluation of recently introduced procedures relating to accuracy of information (paragraph 3.3).	Set up monitoring and success indicators to support the evaluation process for accuracy of information	Undertaking an assessment to articulate definitions of success to facilitate benchmarking of the procedures	From May-December 2014	Principal and Director of Studies	Management Committee meeting	Management Committee meeting minutes
		Establish an evaluation action plan	From May-December 2014	Director of Studies and heads of department	Management Committee meeting	Management Committee meeting minutes
		Implementation of action plan/adjustment and monitoring of actions	December 2014-January 2015	Director of Studies	Quality Control Manager	Management Committee meeting minutes
	Annual monitoring reports shared with College staff for their actions and responses to be included in the Annual Monitoring Review report 2014-15	Asking questions to measure how well the intervention has met its own internally derived goals	From November 2014-June 2015	Director of Studies and heads of department	Quality Control Manager	Management Committee meeting minutes
		Establish criteria for success for next steps or future initiatives	From June-December 2015	Principal, Director of Studies and heads of department	Management Committee meetings	Annual Monitoring and Review Report

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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**.