



ICE Academy Global Ltd

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

March 2014

Key findings about ICE Academy Global 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.

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 this awarding organisation.

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**:

- involvement with community groups supports widening participation and student progression to employment (paragraph 2.3)
- the high level academic and pastoral support which is very well regarded by students (paragraph 2.7).

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:

- employ robust and consistent enrolment, retention, achievement and progression data to monitor and evaluate student performance (paragraph 1.3)
- ensure staff engage fully with the Quality Code (paragraph 1.4)
- establish rigorous and consistent admissions procedures (paragraph 2.8)
- systematically review the provision of resources to provide parity of students' learning opportunities across sites (paragraph 2.12).

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

- systematically report on all meetings and monitor actions arising (paragraph 1.2)
- provide students with access to external examiner reports (paragraph 1.5)
- formalise effective arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice between sites (paragraph 2.5)
- produce a dedicated work experience handbook (paragraph 2.9)
- consider the use of a virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.13)
- produce consistent information for each higher education programme in line with *Chapter A3: The programme level* of the Quality Code (paragraph 3.2)
- develop and deploy a detailed written policy for the management of published information (paragraph 3.4).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by QAA at ICE Academy Global Ltd (the Academy), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Pearson. The review was carried out by Mrs Camilla Bunt, Dr Tommie Anderson-Jaquest, Mr Paul Monroe (reviewers) and Ms AnnMarie Colbert (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 documentation supplied by the Academy and its awarding organisation, meetings with staff and students, and the report of the 2012 review by QAA.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- the requirements of the awarding organisation.

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

The Academy aims to provide high-quality education in a supportive environment to students from diverse backgrounds. Formed in November 2010, the Academy began delivering programmes in January 2011. The main site is in Leicester and there are two further premises in Peterborough and Smethwick, which opened in 2012. A total of 452 full-time students are enrolled across the three sites. Enrolment has increased by 154 per cent compared to the previous QAA review. At the time of this review the provider offered the following higher education programmes with student numbers in brackets:

Pearson

- HND Business Studies (287)
- HND Creative Media (136)
- HND Travel & Tourism (29).

The provider's stated responsibilities

The Academy's responsibilities include student selection, admission and support. Responsibility for setting and marking assessments, learning and teaching, and learning resources also rest with the Academy as does the provision of information about learning opportunities. The Academy states that Pearson has responsibility for quality review of higher education, programme specifications and intended learning outcomes. Responsibilities stated as shared between the Academy and Pearson include strategic development of higher education, identification of curriculum needs, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and student appeals.

Recent developments

The Academy opened new premises in Manchester, Bedford and Croydon in 2013. The sites were closed in January 2014 because they had not been designated for the purposes of

¹ www.gaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight

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

student support. At the time of closure 459 students were enrolled in their first year of study. Subsequent arrangements to protect the interests of the students include liaison with other providers to facilitate transfer and support for some students approaching unit completion. The Academy plans to expand the Pearson offer in the near future to include a HND in Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families, and a HND in Sports Management.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the Academy were invited to present a submission to the review team. A written response and video prepared by students was available to the review team at the visit. Students were supplied with the QAA guidance about preparing a student submission by the Academy. Students also provided helpful information during the preparatory meeting and to the team during the review visit.

Detailed findings about ICE Academy Global Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Academy fulfils effectively its responsibilities for managing academic standards. Three Directors, one of whom is the Principal, advocate a strategic approach to managing academic standards. The recently implemented revised organisational structure provides increased quality and programme level management. Recent reinforcements include a Quality Manager, dedicated programme managers, a Quality Consultant and the formation of an Academic Advisory Group. Plans are in place to recruit a Vice-Principal and strengthen the role of curriculum managers. Consistency across the provision is supported by common procedures and a dedicated internal inspection regime.

1.2 A structured system of regular meetings ensures the effective maintenance of Academic Standards. The purpose and scope of key meetings is clarified in the Quality Assurance Manual. Assessment Boards at the end of each session review achievement grades and student progression prior to accreditation. Assessment Boards also consider cases of extenuating circumstances, cheating and plagiarism. Senior management, curriculum management and resources management meetings occur regularly as do programme team meetings. Boards of Study which include all students on each programme take place biannually to formally gather student feedback. However, the presentation and level of formality of meeting minutes differs. Actions, responsibilities and timescales are not always clear and minutes do not always follow the Academy's specified format. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to systematically report on all meetings and monitor actions arising.

1.3 The Academy generates broad statistical data. Production of more detailed information about the student population is planned and the Directors are piloting a system to chart individual student progress. Data includes information about retention and progression, but lacks clarity about achievement. The annual review includes data aggregated from across the provision with limited evaluation. This inhibits the contribution data may make to ensuring that academic standards are being maintained. It is **advisable** that the Academy employ robust and consistent enrolment, retention, achievement and progression data to monitor and evaluate student performance.

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

1.4 The Academy takes appropriate account of the expectations of the awarding organisation in its management of academic standards. Staff are also assisted in their work by the information provided in the Quality Assurance Manual. Content includes the expectations and requirements of external bodies and the Academy's own policies and procedures. The Quality Assurance Manual is referenced to the Quality Code, but the guidance is not yet being fully utilised. Staff awareness of the purpose and use of the Quality Code is variable. Understanding of the responsibilities placed upon higher education providers to benchmark their performance against the expectations of the Quality Code is not clearly articulated by the staff. It is **advisable** that the Academy ensure staff engage fully with the Quality Code.

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

1.5 Internal and external verification is used appropriately to ensure a consistent approach to assessment decisions and to assure academic standards. Outcomes of external verification are used to enhance the quality of academic provision. External verifier reports are received by the Principal and distributed to Directors, programme teams and the Quality Manager. Results of external verifier reports are discussed, fed back into the organisation and actively used to improve the quality of the Academy's academic provision, and to resolve anomalies that arise in respect of managing and maintaining academic standards. However, external verifier reports are not shared with students which inhibits student engagement with quality management processes. Thus the Academy is not meeting the Expectation in *Chapter B7: External examining* of the Quality Code. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to provide students with access to external examiner reports.

1.6 External verification is used appropriately to confirm the fairness and consistency of internal verification against Pearson expectations. The Internal Verification Handbook and policy provides staff with clear instructions about assessment and internal verification. Staff benefit from in-house training focused on assessment and internal verification processes. Consistency of assessment decisions is supported by verification of student work across sites by the Quality Manager who has the Lead Internal Verifier role.

1.7 Overall the Academy manages its responsibilities for delivering academic standards effectively. Roles and responsibilities are clear and the system of structured meetings appropriate. Mechanisms for management are in accordance with the requirements of the awarding organisation and continuance of these arrangements appears probable. Academic standards are potentially at risk from the Academy's incomplete use of data and limited staff engagement with the Quality Code. Academic standards can be further secured with more comprehensive reporting of meetings and the provision of students with access to external examiner reports.

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 organisation.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities is administered as outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6. This structure is generally effective to ensure appropriate learning opportunities.

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

2.2 The Academy's use of external reference points reflects those in paragraph 1.4. Effective use is made of the Pearson unit descriptors and associated guidance in teaching and learning. Since the last review progress has been made in referencing the Academy's Quality Assurance Manual to the Quality Code. However, staff cognisance of the Quality Code is yet to be fully realised and much remains to be done to support staff to use the guidance to improve the provision.

2.3 Local external reference points are used productively to enhance learning opportunities. The Academic Advisory Group is an example of the formalisation of local links which provide the Academy with advice about employment and community matters. This valuable liaison with sections of the local community from which students are typically drawn is central to the Academy mission. The Academy's involvement with community groups which supports widening participation and student progression to employment is **good practice**.

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

2.4 The clear teaching and learning policy is consistently implemented by staff. The quality of teaching is reviewed and developed through regular structured teaching observation. Staff identify clear examples of enhancements to teaching and learning practice arising from teaching observations. Outcomes are comprehensively recorded and provide staff with detailed and constructive feedback about their teaching. Observation outcomes also inform the Academy's training and development programme. The benefits of accompanying management-driven teaching observation with peer observation is understood by the Academy and a system is under development.

2.5 The internal verification process through which assessments are scrutinised is used appropriately. However, there is some inconsistency in assessment documentation and procedures between the three centres. Good practice is shared informally. Parity of student experience may be enhanced if existing good practice is formally shared between the three centres. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to formalise effective arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice between sites.

2.6 The quality of teaching and learning is formally and appropriately monitored through student-focused Boards of Study and questionnaires. Minutes of Boards of Study meetings capture student feedback and indicate intentions but outcomes are not always clearly stated. Students confirm improvements to computer and library services made as a result of their feedback.

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

2.7 Student induction includes helpful information on pastoral issues and the development of good academic practice as well as programme details. All students are allocated a personal tutor who provides academic and pastoral support. Staff are readily available and provide prompt and effective support. Students confirm generous academic, personal and financial help enables them to overcome difficulties and complete their studies. Facilities and flexible timetable arrangements ensure that cultural and religious requirements are met. Learning opportunities are enhanced by a supportive and intellectually challenging multicultural learning environment that is highly appreciated by students. The high level academic and pastoral support which is very well regarded by students is **good practice**.

2.8 Some lower than anticipated retention rates are acknowledged by the Academy. Students from a range of backgrounds and experience are recruited. The Recruitment and Admissions Policy clearly identifies staff roles and responsibilities for student admission. Training has taken place to raise staff awareness of the parity of levels of overseas qualifications. Criteria for entry accord with awarding organisation expectations. However, specific mention of language test score required for those for whom English is not their first language is absent. For applicants who fulfil the entry criteria, the interview includes Academy-devised written work to enable literacy and numeracy to be assessed. However, the low retention rates indicate that robust admissions processes need to be consistently applied to ensure that students are at a standard appropriate to embark on higher-level

programmes. It is **advisable** for the Academy to establish rigorous and consistent admissions procedures.

2.9 Work experience for Level 5 media students is carefully selected to support curriculum aims. Some students undertake work experience with local media organisations and businesses in the east midlands. For some students work experience has led to employment. The arrangements are well planned, suitably supervised and the outcomes used appropriately. However, there is no collated information to support students and work experience providers in understanding their roles, responsibilities and expectations. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to produce a dedicated work experience handbook.

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

2.10 A coherent staff development programme supports consistent practice in assessment, feedback and internal verification in each centre. The Academy ensures most academic staff have a teaching qualification on appointment or work towards a qualification during service. The importance of teaching staff maintaining their professional practice to complement their academic duties is acknowledged and valued. Continuing professional development is a requirement of the professional bodies to which some academic staff members belong. Requests for staff development are generally supported. Staff have a useful combination of subject specialisms together with recent vocational experiences.

2.11 The Academy evaluates its staff development programme effectively by scrutinising its teaching profile and the annual external verifier reports. Continuing professional development is used to help inform the way in which the academic members of staff are deployed. Individual members of staff also undertake research and scholarly activity independently and use the outcomes to inform the quality of learning opportunities. However, the Academy does not systematically record individual research and scholarly activity and has no formal mechanism for monitoring the impact of this activity on teaching and learning.

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

2.12 The Academy allocates resources on a reactive basis following informal meetings with staff or in response to issues raised by students at regular Boards of Study. The teaching environment promotes a level of student learning appropriate for the programmes delivered. Recently expanded facilities include newly upgraded media studios at Leicester. The Academy manages an online television platform and a local radio station which transmits in 24 languages. Television broadcasts on the website are managed by staff with contributions from students. Broadcasts generated by students are transmitted across sites which provide a practical basis for teaching and learning and at the same time supports the dissemination of information. Subject-specific libraries and a main library are located in each site. Disparities in resources across different sites are acknowledged and are being addressed by the Academy. External verifiers and students perceive that reference materials are limited and more core texts are necessary. A formal system for resource allocation and planned expenditure, to be overseen by the Directors, is under development. It is **advisable** for the Academy to systematically review the provision of resources to provide parity of students' learning opportunities across sites.

2.13 The Academy uses an internet hosting service as a repository to provide students with access to course materials. Staff upload materials and the technical interface is managed by specialist staff. The Academy is consulting about a virtual learning environment

with the intention of providing a fully-accessible teaching platform within the year. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to consider the use of a virtual learning environment.

2.14 In summary, the Academy is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing quality of learning opportunities. As described in 1.7 above responsibilities and processes are appropriate and continuance of these arrangements appears likely. The Academy's involvement with community groups and the high level academic and pastoral support are good practice. Potential risks to the quality of learning opportunities are posed by the inconsistent implementation of admissions procedures and the lack of a systematic approach to the review and provision of resources. Quality of learning opportunities can be enhanced by sharing good practice between sites, provision of a virtual learning environment and a dedicated work experience handbook.

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

3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 The Academy's comprehensive website clearly reflects the quality of educational experience which a prospective student can expect. The inclusion of links to social media enables proactive communication with students. The website is the main channel for providing information to students and other stakeholders about programmes and learning opportunities. The website is lively and easy to navigate although some page links have functional limitations and some incorrect labelling. The presentation of the Academy's printed marketing materials is lively and the content trustworthy.

3.2 Student handbooks for each programme are clearly presented and include helpful information about student responsibilities, learning and assessment. These are published on the website and in hard copy. Handbooks contain important generic information including unit specifications developed by the awarding organisation. However, clear information to show how the modules selected by the Academy are combined into a coherent qualification is absent. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to produce consistent information for each higher education programme in line with *Chapter A3: The programme level* of the Quality Code.

3.3 The Academy's Quality Assurance Manual and policies related to staff, students and site management are clearly presented and linked to the Quality Code. However, accessibility is inhibited by the absence of an index. Information contained in the Employee Handbook clearly sets out expectations of staff.

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

3.4 The Academy implements effective procedures to oversee the production of published information. Information is reviewed regularly during the year with overall authority delegated to Directors. Policies and procedures are updated by a nominated Director and reviewed by a consultant. The Academy radio station is managed and the content monitored by media staff. Arrangements for monitoring the development of printed marketing materials are thorough. The Academy plans to develop procedures for the management of information

with a dedicated marketing and public information team. There is no information policy. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to develop and deploy a detailed written policy for the management of published information.

3.5 The information provided to stakeholders about learning opportunities is fit for purpose and accurate. The Academy recognises the information it is responsible for publishing and uses appropriate means to ensure the veracity of information. The team believe that the production of consistent information for each higher education programme, in line with *Chapter A3: The programme level* of the Quality Code, will enhance published information. The team also consider a comprehensive written policy has the potential to further secure the management of published information.

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

Action plan³

ICE Academy Global 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 Academy:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involvement with community groups supports widening participation and student progression to employment (paragraph 2.3) 	<p>Provide wider number of opportunities within the community and local employers</p> <p>Provide additional support to learners for progression to employment</p>	<p>Join local Chamber of Commerce and Leicester Asian Business Association</p> <p>Smethwick Chamber of Commerce, and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce</p>	Membership to be achieved by June 2014	Directors	Academic Advisory Board	Monitor change in number of work-based placements and opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the high level of academic and pastoral support which is very well regarded by students (paragraph 2.7) 	Improve the quality of recording of tutorial activities across three sites, and improve consistency of pastoral support	<p>Establish a common process for recording tutorial activities</p> <p>Provide staff development on tutorial support</p>	<p>Sept 2014</p> <p>July 2014 Dec 2014</p>	Quality Manager	<p>Principal/ Directors</p> <p>Academic Advisory Board</p>	Quality review of Tutorial records

³ The Academy 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 Academy's awarding organisation.

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 Academy to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> employ robust and consistent enrolment, retention, achievement and progression data to monitor and evaluate student performance (paragraph 1.3) 	To provide robust and reliable management information for retention, enrolment and achievement, to monitor and evaluate student performance leading to improved retention and success rates	<p>The current College Management System to be upgraded and staff trained to ensure that all data regarding enrolment, retention and achievement is linked to provide accurate reporting mechanisms</p> <p>Review and update benchmarks for retention and achievement at Academic Advisory Board meetings</p>	<p>Aug 2014 (implement)</p> <p>Nov 2014 (review)</p> <p>Jan 2015 (review)</p> <p>Mar 2015 (review)</p> <p>June 2015 (review)</p>	Director for Technology and Marketing	Management meeting and Academic Advisory Board	<p>Production of accurate monthly reports, from 1 October 2014</p> <p>Mapping of retention and achievement by year groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure staff engage fully with the Quality Code (paragraph 1.4) 	All staff to review standards and identify where and how the Quality Code impacts on centres, policies and learner experience	Specific staff development to demonstrate how the Quality Code is embedded in policies and how it informs teaching practice	<p>July 2014</p> <p>Nov 2014</p>	Director for Curriculum	Management meeting and Academic Advisory Board	Signposting within Academy processes and teaching and learning delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish rigorous and consistent admissions procedures 	To ensure learners who are recruited have the necessary skills to succeed	Ensure all learners have a qualification at Level 3 prior achievement or equivalent	Aug 2014 (implementation of English Test and prior achievement)	Director for Curriculum	Management meeting and Academic Advisory Board	<p>Improved retention and achievement</p> <p>Recorded levels</p>

(paragraph 2.8)		Sampling of enrolment forms to ensure compliance	Nov 2014 (review) Feb 2015 (review)			of English on entry Monitor qualifications on entry and profile against retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematically review the provision of resources to provide parity of students' learning opportunities across sites (paragraph 2.12). 	Provide parity of learning resources across all sites	Amend Resources Policy to incorporate equality of resources on all sites Provide a budget to sites requiring additional resources	Dec2014 Aug 2014 amend Policy Sept 2014 approve Policy amendments	Director for Technology and Marketing	Management meeting and Academic Advisory Board	Audit evidence and resources/ equipment register Student feedback and Quality Review Process to focus on resource equality across sites
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 Academy to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematically report on all meetings and monitor actions arising (paragraph 1.2) 	Provide common framework for reporting/ recording all meetings Records to identify action and person responsible	Provide an accurate record of meetings, actions and outcomes	July 2014	Director of Administration and Human Resources	Management meeting and Academic Advisory Board	Copies of minutes of meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide students with access to external examiner reports 	Give open access to external examiners' reports to learners	All examiner reports to be available online and hard copies to be available on each campus	June 2014	Director for Technology and Marketing	Academic Advisory Board	Access to learners

(paragraph 1.5)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise effective arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice between sites (paragraph 2.5) 	To have common assessment frameworks and processes on all sites and share good practice	<p>Review all assessment materials to ensure a uniform approach</p> <p>Implement formal staff development for sharing of good practice</p>	July 2014	<p>Director for Curriculum</p> <p>Director of Administration and Human Resources</p>	Academic Advisory Board	<p>Common assessment</p> <p>Records of sharing of good practice staff development</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce a dedicated work experience handbook (paragraph 2.9) 	Guidance to learners for work experience activities. Produce guidance to employers on requirements of work experience	Increase the number of learners engaging in work experience and support the learners in obtaining work placements	Oct 2014	Director for Technology and Marketing	Management Meeting	Production of handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider the use of a virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.13) 	Provide e-learning resources for learners and staff	To improve learning opportunities and broaden the delivery methods to enhance learning outcomes	Jan 2015	Director for Technology and Marketing	Management meeting and Academic Advisory Board	Live online learning platform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce consistent information for each higher education programme in line with <i>Chapter A3: The programme level of the Quality Code</i> (paragraph 3.2) 	Review handbooks and update as required	Produce consistent information for each higher education programme	Aug 2014	<p>Director for Technology and Marketing</p> <p>Director for Curriculum</p>	Management meeting	Updated handbooks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop and 	Policy document for	Produce a policy	Oct 2014	Director for	Management	Policy document

<p>deploy a detailed written policy for the management of published information (paragraph 3.4).</p>	<p>management of published information</p>	<p>document to ensure that published information is consistent and accurate</p>		<p>Technology and Marketing</p>	<p>meeting and Academic Advisory Board</p>	<p>produced and actions reported to Academic Advisory Board</p>
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About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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

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

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

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

awarding organisation An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*.

good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

highly trusted sponsor An organisation that the UK Government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

learning outcomes What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

programme (of study) An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

programme specifications Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes** of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

provider (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

quality See **academic quality**.

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

subject benchmark statement A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

threshold academic standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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