



ABI College Ltd

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

April 2014

Key findings about ABI College Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in April 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 the University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth and Pearson.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of this awarding body and 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**:

- the robust implementation of policies for ensuring the authenticity of student work (paragraphs 1.4 and 3.3)
- the efficient collection and use of online feedback to improve the content and operation of the website (paragraph 3.1).

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:

- ensure that annual monitoring reports contain full analyses of data and clear action plans (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.4)
- align policies and procedures with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraphs 1.5)
- adopt a systematic approach to providing formal feedback on students' work (paragraph 2.7)
- provide students with access to the external examiners' reports (paragraph 3.2)
- develop a system to formally authorise information published through the virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.6)
- use a secure student management information system (paragraphs 3.7 and 2.11).

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

- improve the submission rates for student assignments (paragraph 1.8)
- provide a timely and informative response to student feedback (paragraph 2.6)
- access the training for assessors and verifiers that is offered by Pearson (paragraph 2.10)
- enable all students to have adequate and equivalent access to library learning resources to facilitate and encourage scholarship (paragraph 2.12)
- review the accuracy of the information provided in programme handbooks (paragraph 3.4).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at ABI College Ltd (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the 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 the University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth and Pearson. The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Miss Karen Buckwell, Mr Chris Maguire, (reviewers) and Dr Anne Miller (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 provider and awarding body/organisation, meetings with staff, students, and reports of reviews 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 regulations and quality frameworks of the awarding organisation and awarding body.

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 2004 by the current proprietor, who is the Chief Executive Officer, in order to provide high-quality international education. Initially known as Queensland College London, in 2012 the College's name was changed to ABI College Ltd. The College is based at premises in Acton, West London and in two adjacent buildings in central Reading. The College originally established its premises in Reading in order to accommodate an expanding population of 500 students. In addition it was keen to offer an alternative location outside London to international students who had expressed this preference. In 2012 changes in access to employment for international students led to a downturn in the numbers of international students recruited by the College. The College currently has 174 students who comprise a mixture of international, European Union and UK students. Students attending the College from the UK are now eligible for funding from the Student Loans Company.

The College has five full-time and four part-time members of academic staff, the majority of whom are qualified to level 7 while two are qualified to level 8. The professional staff includes the Chief Executive Officer, a Marketing Manager and an admissions administrator.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisation and body with student numbers for each location in brackets:

Pearson

- Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Business (Acton: 36; Reading:16)
- Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Computing and Systems Development (Reading: 6)
- Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Health and Social Care Management (Acton: 37; Reading: 5)

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2669

- Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management (Acton: 9)
- Level 7 Strategic Management and Leadership (Acton: 1)

University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth

- Level 7 Master of Arts in Strategic Management and Leadership (Acton:14)
- Level 7 Master of Arts in Strategic Management and Leadership Top-up (Acton: 50)

The provider's stated responsibilities

Under the terms of its agreement with the University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth (the University), the College has offered a master's programme since September 2012. The University retains responsibility for the standards and quality of its programmes. The University provides guidelines and the regulatory framework for operation of the programmes, including its protocol for complaints and appeals. A link tutor is appointed by the University to act as a principal point of contact and monitor the operation of the partnership. The University requires submission of an annual monitoring report by the College. The College's recruitment and induction of students is monitored by the University. The production of programme and module materials is jointly undertaken by the College and University. Information available externally in brochures or on the website is also a shared responsibility. The College is responsible for provision of suitable teaching accommodation and resources to support learning and for gathering student feedback. In addition, students who register with the University have full access to its helpful online learning resources. In the first year of the partnership, University staff provided all teaching which has been delegated to the College. Setting and marking of assignments by College staff is subject to moderation by University staff and its external examiners. Award certificates and transcripts are provided by the University based on information held by both partners.

The College is responsible for staff recruitment, staff appraisal, development and currency and the University makes staff development activities available to College staff. This includes an annual Learning and Teaching conference and a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The University provides award certificates which specify that the programme is delivered in collaboration with the College.

Under the terms of its agreement with Pearson, the College delivers programmes that lead to Pearson awards. Pearson provides guidelines and the regulatory framework for operation of the programmes. The College provides the staff, teaching accommodation, learning and information technology resources and is responsible for recruiting, enrolling and supporting the students. The information provided for students and applicants is a joint responsibility of the College and Pearson. Students and staff from the College have access to online learning resources of Pearson. The College is responsible for staff recruitment, performance review and staff training and development, which can also be purchased from Pearson. College tutors teach the programmes, set and mark assignments, conduct internal moderation of assessed student work and provide feedback to students. Student pastoral care, collecting and acting upon student feedback, management of complaints and appeals are College responsibilities. Pearson is responsible for external verification of assessed student work which it monitors through annual reports from its external examiners. The College is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of information about learning opportunities including that published on its website. The College is required to respond effectively to annual reports from Pearson and its external examiners. Provision of transcripts and award certificates is the responsibility of Pearson.

Recent developments

The College appointed a new Principal in 2014 who currently works on a part-time basis (0.4 full-time equivalent) to lead the academic management of the College. The Principal is gradually assuming responsibilities previously assigned to either the Chief Executive Officer or the former Director of Quality Assurance. This is enabling the Chief Executive Officer to focus on strategic planning, staff appointments, resource allocation, international development and marketing. Similarly the Director of Quality Assurance role has become one of a part-time Quality Advisor and the appointment of a College Registrar is imminent. The remit of the Registrar will be to maintain student records, and act as a general liaison with the awarding body and awarding organisation. The College currently holds student records in a basic information management system and multiple users record assessment outcomes on simple spreadsheets. The College plans to acquire a more sophisticated student management information system and the Chief Executive Officer is currently considering alternative options.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A written submission prepared by student representatives was produced using collated evidence from records of meetings and surveys of student opinion. Students met the Coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the team during the review visit and made a helpful contribution to the review.

Detailed findings about ABI College Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College fulfils its responsibilities for the management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The College conducted a management review in 2013 which led to the improvement and extension of its coherent organisational structure. There are well-defined executive functions, clear reporting lines and an extended committee structure.

1.2 The Governing Council oversees strategic planning and the College intends to strengthen this senior committee by adding additional external and local members. The Senior Management Team and a Courses Committee report to the Academic Board which maintains oversight of academic standards and quality. Productive monthly meetings of the Senior Management Team led by the Principal are used for operational management of academic standards and quality. The Principal reports to the Chief Executive Officer and the Governing Council and is supported in this by the Quality Advisor. Programme leaders report to the Courses Coordinator and the Head of Learning Support and Pastoral Care, who report to the Principal. The University provides a link tutor to support delivery of the master's programmes and a member of the Governing Council.

1.3 Despite the introduction of an annual monitoring guide, there is scope to improve the quality of annual monitoring and the associated action planning. Programme leaders prepare annual monitoring reports for consideration by the Courses Committee which distils a summary report for the Academic Board. Reports lack analyses of student retention rates for individual units and confirmation of the action taken in response to external examiners' recommendations. It is **advisable** for the College to ensure that annual monitoring reports contain full analyses of data and clear action plans.

1.4 The College takes seriously its responsibility for ensuring that students value the academic integrity of their coursework. Academic misconduct policies are accessible and considered in detail during staff and student induction sessions. Students are trained to use standard academic referencing protocols and plagiarism-detection software to safeguard the originality of their work. Detected plagiarism or other academic malpractice is reported and acted upon by an Unfair Means Panel of the Academic Board. The robust implementation of policies for ensuring the authenticity of student work is **good practice**.

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

1.5 The College relies heavily on the guidelines and quality assurance procedures of the awarding body and awarding organisation to assure academic standards. Consequently the use of programme specifications and level descriptors aligns with *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards* of the Quality Code. The College adjusts its regulations to mirror associated changes in those of the University and Pearson. There are, for example, new procedures for the College's student appeals process and its admissions processes. While adjustments have been made, the College has yet to align all of its policies and procedures with the Quality Code. It is **advisable** for the College to align policies and procedures with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

1.6 Staff and students are informed about the Quality Code during induction. The College's virtual learning environment (VLE) includes an accessible link to the Quality

Code. The College provides continuing professional development sessions for staff to raise their awareness of the Quality Code. Discussion to date has focused on annual monitoring, assessment practices and use of e-learning resources. The programme in Health and Social Care Management includes beneficial work-based learning. The College is building a network of employer contacts to support students to attain valuable work experience placements.

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

1.7 The College operates effective internal verification processes and external examining arrangements to assure academic standards. Students receive assignment briefs containing helpful assessment information including grading criteria for intended learning outcomes. The external examiners are appointed by the University and Pearson and work with the College in a supportive way. For Pearson awards, designated tutors conduct internal verification methodically using a standard pro forma and protocol. For University awards, standards of assessment are moderated by its staff and the external examiner.

1.8 The College's Examination Board monitors student performance and progression and has identified the adverse effect of non-submission of assignments on student attainment. The external examiners' reports to the University confirm that students are being assessed and supported well, but that there is a high rate of non-submission of work. All examiners recommend introduction of unit and programme monitoring to enable closer tracking of quality and standards. To enhance retention, the College has introduced new admission arrangements combined with testing and provides an extensive learning support programme. Despite implementation of new initiatives the College acknowledges a continuing problem of non-submission of assignments in some units. It would be **desirable** for the College to improve the submission rates for student assignments.

1.9 In summary, the College manages its higher education programmes effectively in accordance with the requirements of its awarding body and awarding organisation. The organisational structure is fit for purpose and prospects for academic standards being maintained and enhanced appear sound. Revised admissions procedures are clear and rigorous and student participation in committee meetings is well developed. Annual monitoring procedures are in place, but there is scope to improve the quality of management information including the evaluation of students' achievement. There is an effective process for ensuring the authenticity of students' work. While the College uses appropriate external reference points in managing standards it has yet to align all practices with the Quality Code. The College has robust procedures for internal and external verification and external examination but needs to monitor and improve submission rates for assignments.

The review team has **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of its awarding body and awarding organisation.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 There are effective processes for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities (see paragraph 1.2). The Principal has responsibility for developing the teaching, learning and assessment strategy. He is supported in this by the Head of Learning

Support and Pastoral Care and the Courses Coordinator. The Head of Learning Support and Pastoral Care is implementing a new College-wide programme of learning support and study skills.

2.2 Programme leaders are responsible to the Courses Coordinator for ensuring that students receive appropriate teaching, learning opportunities and academic support. The Courses Committee meets regularly under the chairmanship of the Courses Coordinator to address common concerns and disseminate good practice.

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

2.3 The College makes effective use of the external reference points provided by the University and Pearson in the College's regulations and policy documents (see paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6). This ensures that staff and students are provided with clear information about the academic standards of programmes of study. The College has yet to publish a teaching and learning strategy and related policies on the quality of learning opportunities (see paragraph 1.5). It would be beneficial for the College to specify its approach to monitoring and supporting students with additional learning needs or protected characteristics. This can include arrangements for provision of reasonable adjustments and agreed learning contract. The external members of the Governing Council bring a potentially valuable perspective that is recognised but not yet fully exploited by the College.

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

2.4 The College continues to develop a range of effective mechanisms for assuring the quality of learning and teaching. The College has a new marking and assessment policy and teaching observation is being integrated with appraisal and development of teaching staff. Annual monitoring is the central mechanism that the College uses to assure itself that quality is being maintained and enhanced. The College could use available information and data more effectively to enhance its strategic planning and oversight of the quality of teaching and learning (see paragraph 1.3).

2.5 Constructive arrangements for active student representation on all College committees build on previously commended practice. The number of student representatives has increased and a postgraduate forum has been established in line with a University requirement. The College is considering inviting the University's link tutor to join the postgraduate forum to support engagement in the partnership.

2.6 The College listens to the views of students and responds quickly to any concerns about inadequate teaching. While the College is receptive it does not provide a timely report of the action taken in response to student feedback. The College intends to establish a staff/student representative forum and to capture and respond to students views through the VLE. It would be **desirable** for the College to provide a timely and informative response to student feedback.

2.7 The quality and depth of formative and summative feedback provided on written work is inconsistent. The written feedback on student work can be detailed, critical and constructive or brief with little indication of areas requiring development. Students and external examiners have commented on the variability of feedback and senior College staff acknowledge the concern. While new marking and assessment guidelines and protocols have been introduced and staff development provided, the scope for improvement remains. It is **advisable** for the College to adopt a systematic approach to providing formal feedback on students' work.

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

2.8 The College has introduced a variety of formal mechanisms to assure itself that students are supported effectively. The Head of Learning Support and Pastoral Care, a Senior Counsellor and the Women's Officer have introduced fresh initiatives in support for students. An admission interview procedure supports admission with integrity and provides a diagnostic tool that informs personal development planning. Further support is provided through the induction process and the study skills component of each programme which includes academic misconduct training. A personal tutor system and attendance monitoring enable College staff to quickly identify any students at risk. Timetabled pastoral care meetings between students and staff have also been introduced and augment available support. There are sufficient and effective mechanisms for students to comment on the quality of the support that they receive.

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

2.9 The College has introduced a revised staff development policy and is gradually improving the arrangements for staff review and development. There is a formal staff induction programme and a linked sequence of teaching observation, appraisal and staff development. All new tutors participate in a structured induction programme, teaching observation, appraisal and continuing professional development events provided by the College. There is scope for College managers to provide tutors with developmental feedback on their performance that is constructively critical to drive quality enhancement.

2.10 The College encourages tutors to undertake development and acquire higher degrees and teaching qualifications. There is little financial support for staff development activities beyond in-house training sessions and senior College staff acknowledge this limitation. The College holds occasional internal staff development sessions which it evaluates and which the Principal intends to extend in future. The College is exploring the feasibility of allowing all tutors to participate in staff development opportunities that are offered by the University. Relatively few tutors have been trained as assessors and internal verifiers and the College recognises that this would be beneficial for all tutors. The College has not taken the opportunity for its staff to be trained by the awarding organisation as assessors and internal verifiers. It would be **desirable** for the College to access the training for assessors and verifiers that is offered by Pearson.

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 Students report that the College's academic facilities are sufficient for their needs and this is confirmed by external examiners. The College has invested in new information technology and developed a VLE, that is well received by students. In response to student feedback, the College has improved classrooms at the Acton campus. Tutors use new smart boards while adjustments have been made to wireless internet connectivity and classroom temperature control. The College's strategic resource planning would be greatly enhanced by use of sophisticated and timely academic management information.

2.12 Access to library-learning resources differs for students on Pearson and University programmes. There is no lending library at the College. All students have access to core learning resources that are placed on the VLE. Students on Pearson programmes have access only to limited copies of core textbooks at the College, on a room use only basis. The students on the University programmes have superior access to the full resources of its library which includes electronic materials and lending rights. The poor library provision for

Pearson students restricts wide reading and may inhibit scholarship, explaining the relatively limited use of references in assignments. In discussion the College noted that e-books offer a solution but that the costs were prohibitive. It would be **desirable** for the College to enable all students to have adequate and equivalent access to library learning resources to facilitate and encourage scholarship.

2.13 In summary, the College has sound mechanisms for the management of its responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities. The prospects for quality being maintained at current levels appear sound. Appropriately qualified staff have access to regular internal staff development opportunities. It would be desirable for the College to take advantage of external opportunities for staff development available through its awarding body and organisation. College teaching facilities are adequate but library provision is limited and should be reviewed to ensure parity of treatment for students. Electronic resources to support learning are otherwise appropriate and there are clear procedures to maintain and improve them. Student views are systematically gathered and used to evaluate provision and inform developments. Students are engaged and well supported but development by the College of systematic and consistent approaches to the delivery of feedback on student work would be beneficial. It would be desirable for the College to report to the students on action taken in response to their feedback.

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 College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The College uses an accessible website to publish clear, comprehensive and accurate information about the learning opportunities that it offers. The website presents information on programmes of study, entry requirements, fees and contact details that students find useful. Prospective students can make enquiries and submit online applications through the website which links directly to the VLE. Website users can submit comments on its technical effectiveness and content which the College collects and uses to improve and redesign the website. The efficient collection and use of online feedback to improve the content and operation of the website is **good practice**.

3.2 The VLE is easy to navigate and contains comprehensive information and learning material. Assessment information, study skill packages for students, key policy documents, and minutes of committee meetings are also provided. Staff, but not students, have access to external examiners' reports on the VLE. It is **advisable** for the College to provide students with access to the external examiners' reports.

3.3 The College publishes a comprehensive student handbook containing a students' code of commitment, regulations, procedures and information about assessment arrangements and plagiarism. Students reported that the student handbook is a key reference point that is easily located on the VLE.

3.4 Programme handbooks contain suitable information about programme requirements and associated policies but there are inaccuracies in some programme handbooks. This includes variable information about grading criteria, the absence of information on programme duration and the name of the awarding organisation. Students reported that

programme handbooks are useful but did highlight the need for greater clarity in, for example, the MA internship requirements. It would be **desirable** for the College to review the accuracy of the information provided in the programme handbooks.

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 has yet to introduce a clear overarching information management strategy to quality assure the information that it provides and publishes. The College currently uses a version control policy and a public information control policy to govern the quality of some, but not all, information. All College documents for publication and internal use are governed by the version control policy and authorised at Senior Management Team meetings. Public-facing information is governed by the public information control policy and includes programme handbooks, social media and website content, and publicity material. There is systematic recording of proposed changes using a public information change request form prior to implementation and publication.

3.6 There is no systematic oversight of the information published through the VLE. The Courses Coordinator takes responsibility for uploading policies, meeting minutes and external reports to the VLE. Individual teachers upload varying standards of learning materials. It is **advisable** for the College to develop a system to formally authorise information published through the virtual learning environment.

3.7 The College does not have a student management information system and data is entered on a spreadsheet by several members of staff. The College anticipates that the new Registrar will be responsible for managing student data and is considering the purchase of a suitable system. There is a need to capture student characteristics (see paragraph 2.3), to record progression and achievement data securely and to generate analyses of management information. It is **advisable** for the College to use a secure student management information system.

3.8 In summary, the College takes seriously its responsibilities for producing and publishing information about learning opportunities. There are mechanisms in place to ensure that information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy but further enhancement is needed. There are effective mechanisms for monitoring changes to internal information but a systematic and coherent approach to authorisation of published information is not evident. The College is considering purchasing a student management information system to further support the recording and analysis of information about students.

<p>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.</p>

Action plan³

ABI College Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight of April 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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The robust implementation of policies for ensuring the authenticity of student work (paragraphs 1.4 and 3.3) 	Reduced Turnitin percentage	Analyse Turnitin data Publish data to students Create awareness about Turnitin percentage Review Plagiarism report forms Each tutor to submit plagiarism report to programme leaders at the end of each semester	January 2015	Courses Coordinator Programme leaders Teaching staff	Courses Committee Examination Board	Analysis of data on plagiarism Keep under review to maintain low levels of academic malpractice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The efficient collection and use of online feedback to 	Further improvements to the website	Monitoring of feedback using appropriate forms	January 2015	Registrar Principal	Courses Committee	Website forms tied to feedback

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 body and organisation.

improve the content and operation of the website (paragraph 3.1)		Analyse forms and make changes to the website following approval and document changes			Senior Management Team	Incorporate questions on staff and student feedback forms
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that annual monitoring reports contain full analyses of data and clear action plans (paragraphs 1.3 and 2.4) 	Annual monitoring informs/proposes enhancement to development with clear action plans	<p>Criteria for analysed information to be set (for example retention rates, attendance, pass rates, and so on)</p> <p>Collate and analyse data to support and be included in reports</p>	January 2015	Quality Advisor Registrar Courses Coordinator Principal Programme leaders	Courses Committee Examination Board Academic Board	Evidence of reports Analyse data against external benchmarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> align policies and procedures with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 1.5) 	Alignment of College procedures to Quality Code	Complete mapping of College policies to Quality Code	October 2014	Registrar Quality Advisor Courses Coordinator	Courses Committee Academic Board	Completed Matrix Monitor changes and updates to Quality Code Include section on the use of Quality Code in

						the monitoring framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adopt a systematic approach to providing formal feedback on students' work (paragraph 2.7) 	Formative feedback procedure and documentation	<p>Policies to be updated with official formative feedback procedure that has been in development</p> <p>Approval to be gathered from Academic Board</p> <p>Ensure that formal opportunity is given to students for formative feedback for each learning outcome</p> <p>Continuing professional development session to be held in order to ensure that all teaching staff is aware of new procedure</p>	January 2015	<p>Courses Coordinator</p> <p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Teaching staff</p>	<p>Courses Committee</p> <p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Formative feedback documentation</p> <p>Evaluate by means of students' responses on feedback questionnaires</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide students with access to external examiners' reports (paragraph 3.2) 	<p>This has already been available through monitoring reports that are part of courses committee meetings</p> <p>External examiner reports published on ABI Learn</p>	Upload external examiner reports to ABI Learn	August 2014	Programme leaders	Courses Committee	<p>Documents available on ABI Learn</p> <p>External examiner reports will be available in the student resources section</p> <p>Hard copies of the full reports have always</p>

						been tabled at the monitoring meeting of the courses committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a system to formally authorise information published through the virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.6) 	New policy for approval of information published on ABI Learn	Develop a policy and appropriate forms and inform all staff about new procedures (include in continuing professional development session)	September 2014	Registrar Quality Advisor	Courses Committee Senior Management Team	New policy Feedback from staff and students particularly concentrating on the accuracy, currency and completeness of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a secure student management information system (paragraphs 3.7 and 2.11) 	Secure system and operational efficiency	Purchase and implement new system	January 2015	Chief Executive Officer	Senior Management Team Academic Board	New student management system Staff feedback on effectiveness of system when in operation An annual staff feedback form is to be put in to operation to evaluate all aspects of College provision and delivery from staff perspective

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the submission rates for student assignments (paragraph 1.8) 	Higher submission rates	<p>Incorporate full submission of assignment deadlines in relation to Merit/Distinction criteria for HND courses</p> <p>Learning Contract with individual students</p> <p>Review attendance, submission procedures</p> <p>Incorporate formative feedback on regular basis - across the semester</p> <p>Review assessment scoring (during enrolment process)</p> <p>Provide report on submission rates at the end of each semester to be included in annual monitoring</p>	January 2015	<p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Teaching staff</p> <p>Courses Coordinator</p> <p>Registrar</p>	<p>Courses Committee</p> <p>Examination Board</p>	<p>Submission rates monitoring report</p> <p>Evaluate submission rate through monthly student review meetings which are to be instituted from October</p> <p>Set initial target of 75 per cent submission rate subject to six monthly review</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a timely and informative response to student 	Recorded actions in response to student feedback provided on ABI Learn	<p>Action plan to be created for feedback requirements</p> <p>Provide response/actions</p>	31 July 2014	Registrar	Courses Committee	ABI Learn Feedback Forum with relevant information

feedback (paragraph 2.6)		updates on ABI Learn to students				provided (including action dates) Also report at Courses Committee and evaluate as part of monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access the training for assessors and verifiers that is offered by Pearson (paragraph 2.10) 	List of options available for suitable training at HND levels 4-7	Contact Pearson and identify the list of available options	August 2014	Registrar	Senior Management Team	List of available options Encourage staff to attend, support with time and financial assistance and use feedback sessions to spread good practice (with intention to develop training timetable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable all students to have adequate and equivalent access to library learning resources to facilitate and encourage 	<p>Balanced number of books available in Acton and Reading</p> <p>Increased student access to libraries in Reading and Acton</p>	<p>Programme leaders to provide an updated list of core reading material</p> <p>Map this list with current stock</p> <p>Books to be purchased and distributed evenly</p>	January 2015	<p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer</p>	Courses Committee	<p>List of books available in both libraries</p> <p>Library opening hours</p> <p>Include questions on student</p>

scholarship (paragraph 2.12)		between Acton and Reading branches Publish library opening hours to encourage students' use of library outside of their class times				feedback forms and analyse usage and needs of students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the accuracy of the information provided in the programme handbooks (paragraph 3.4) 	Accurate and updated programme handbooks	<p>Review the current programme handbooks</p> <p>Review the information provided by Pearson and QAA on programme handbooks specification</p> <p>Review University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth programme handbooks and adopt good practice</p> <p>Continuing professional development session to all staff informing on good practice identified</p>	September 2014	Programme leaders	<p>Courses Committee</p> <p>Examination Board</p>	<p>New programme handbooks</p> <p>Evaluate by analysis of student feedback to establish satisfaction ratings</p>

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/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx. 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/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2669

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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