Higher Education Review of Greenwich Community College

January 2015

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Greenwich Community College. The review took place from 12 to 14 January 2015 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Tessa Counsell
- Ms Amy Woodgate (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Greenwich Community College and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

In reviewing Greenwich Community College (the College) the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The themes for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the Glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Greenwich Community College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Greenwich Community College.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and the awarding organisation **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **does not meet** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Greenwich Community College.

- The provision of regular higher education Study Skills Workshops (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Greenwich Community College.

By September 2015:

- formalise higher education staff development beyond the current training opportunities to ensure that learning and teaching practices are informed by subject specific scholarship (Expectation B3)
- develop a teaching observation process more related to higher education (Expectation B3)
- develop and implement a process for the management and evaluation of work-based learning including roles and responsibilities (Expectations B4 and B10)
- develop and implement a strategic approach for the involvement of employers in the higher education provision (Expectation B10)
- develop and implement a process which ensures information for higher education provision is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy (Expectation C)
- produce a placement/work-based learning handbook (Expectation C)
- ensure that programme learning outcomes are made more explicit (Expectation C)
- develop the process for monitoring and evaluating destination data, especially foundation degree 'top-up' awards (Expectation C)
- take deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities (Enhancement).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that Greenwich Community College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The actions being taken to developing the virtual learning environment (Expectation B4).
- The steps being taken to improve student survey response rates (Expectation B5).

Theme: Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

There is a well-established system for student representation and strong links between students and their Programme Leader through informal interactions. Given the diversity of the student demographic, including representation of minority ethnic groups who may be unfamiliar with student engagement methods and providing feedback, the wide-spread acknowledgement that these mechanisms exist and are positively received by the student community is encouraging. However, the College acknowledges that these mechanisms could be better used and that it has more work to do, particularly with regards to student survey engagement. Outcomes of student feedback are discussed at staff team meetings and inform wider College action plans, which are lead by the same team. There is no annual monitoring of the effectiveness of the student voice or thematic analysis of issues raised during the academic year to monitor progress. Actions arising from student feedback gathered is communicated back to the student community through class representatives and Programme Leaders. Overall, the College has implemented a solid foundation for student involvement and it is clear the College values its student contributions. The mechanisms are at times informal and it is not clear how these will operate with the projected student recruitment aspirations.

Further explanations of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explained in [Higher Education Review](#).

About Greenwich Community College

Greenwich Community College (the College) is a general further education college currently located over three main sites located in the London Borough of Greenwich. The College has an annual revenue budget of around £16 million. In 2014-15 there were 90 full-time equivalent higher education students. Overall the College has around 17,000 enrolments. The majority of students are part-time.

Programmes delivered by the College include Foundation Degrees in Applied Professional Study (Health and Social Care); Diploma in Education and Training; Professional Study; Supporting Teaching and Learning; Venues, Events and Hospitality Management; and a Foundation Year for Degrees in Science. Recently, the College introduced a BA Hons in Lifelong Learning Sector, but recruitment did not reach the university's target of 15 and the programme was not offered. There is also an HNC Business with Pearson.

HEFCE-funded higher education programmes at the College were validated by the University of Greenwich through the Partner College Network. The conditions of the relationship between the College and the University of Greenwich are detailed in the Partner College Memorandum of Agreement.

Since the last QAA review in 2010, the University of Greenwich, in seeking to reduce its number of partners, decided to withdraw franchised provision from the College in 2014. The College retains some links, for example by providing placements for PGCE students for the University of Greenwich (Post Graduate Certificate of Education for Further Education - Levels 1-5) and sitting on academic committees. At the time of the review, most programmes are still validated by the University of Greenwich. The Diploma in Education and Training is validated by Canterbury Christchurch University (CCCU). In 2014, the College was successful in its bid for HEFCE directly funded student numbers, totalling 130. There is a proposal to seek approval with Canterbury Christchurch University for Foundation Degrees in Venues and Events Management, and Hospitality Management, and with London South Bank University for a Foundation Degree in Accounting. The College will also develop, with Pearson, HNC/Ds in Hospitality, Business, Hair and Beauty Management and Travel and Tourism Management.

The College states that its main challenge is the end of the long-standing partnership with the University of Greenwich, a decision taken by the University at its recent five year Widening Participation review.

The last QAA review of the College was carried out in 2010. Two examples of good practice were identified: the development of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality; and the learning resource facilities and the student support arrangements which were especially beneficial to part-time students.

The review made eight advisable recommendations and two desirable recommendations. In response to those recommendations the College appointed a Head of Higher Education. Identifying good practice by external examiners is undertaken through the partner forum meetings. The moderation process and identifying good practice with reference to assessment feedback has been implemented, especially in HNC Business. The evaluation of staff development in relation to protocols for all tutors, and especially for new staff, has been implemented. The website has been corrected regarding the descriptions of higher education award levels. The information on foundation degrees now confirms that these are qualifications in their own right. The recommendation to develop placement handbooks has not been taken forward (see paragraph 3.9) and the College decided not to develop a higher education teaching observation arrangement (see paragraph 2.15). The desirable

recommendation concerning the development of a common layout for handbooks has been met.

Explanation of the findings about Greenwich Community College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1 The review team scrutinised relevant College and awarding body and organisation documentation, including quality assurance and curriculum approval documents, external examiner reports, and partnership annual reports. Memoranda of Agreement are in place with both universities, with clear responsibilities checklists. The Universities' quality assurance handbooks also detail process and arrangements for franchised provision. The College adheres to these arrangements.

1.2 The College is not involved in programme design, as all the provision is delivered through franchise arrangements. It is the responsibility of the degree-awarding bodies to ensure alignments with the national credit frameworks.

1.3 The team met teaching staff to explore their use and understanding of the *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark* and credit frameworks in the maintenance of academic standards. Teaching staff have been involved in training to be familiar with the Quality Code. Staff showed less awareness of the *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark* and programme-level learning outcomes. Programme-level learning outcomes are agreed during the validation process, lead by the degree-awarding bodies and organisation.

1.4   Responsibility for allocating each qualification to the appropriate level of the FHEQ resides with awarding bodies and organisation. The team concludes that the College is adequately fulfilling its responsibilities in meeting the expectation through adherence to the awarding bodies' and organisation's policies and quality assurance processes. Therefore, Expectation A1 is met both in design and operation, and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.5   The awarding bodies and organisation are responsible for securing academic standards and establishing academic frameworks and regulations to govern award of academic credit. The College is not a degree-awarding body and operates its provision through franchise programme arrangements from the awarding bodies and organisation. These awarding partners have comprehensive academic frameworks and academic regulation processes, together with oversight arrangements which work to ensure the academic standards of their awards. Responsibilities for operational functions delegated to the College are clearly outlined in quality assurance documentation and the memoranda of agreement.

1.6   The College is responsible for maintaining ongoing academic standards of its provisions through the mechanisms indicated in each awarding body's regulations. The College adopts the processes required for each awarding body or organisation individually. The College does not have its own overarching quality assurance guidance or policy for higher education staff at the College, but teaching staff were aware of relevant documentation.

1.7   The team reviewed the relevant partnership documentation and agreements with the awarding bodies and organisation and evaluated the extent to which these responsibilities are understood by teaching staff. Students were aware of the awarding bodies' and organisation's responsibilities and acknowledged the Link Tutor in formalising this relationship. External examiner reports indicate that partnership documentation makes note of external reference points.

1.8   The review team concludes that the College adheres to the frameworks and regulations of the awarding bodies and organisation to secure academic standards. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

1.9   The responsibility for maintaining a definitive record of each programme, in the form of programme specifications and qualification resides with the awarding bodies and organisation. The College is responsible for ensuring these specifications are used as programme reference points and communicated effectively to students. The College is also responsible for delivery of assessment, and monitoring and review of the programme provisions.

1.10   The team reviewed programme-specific documentation, including programme handbooks and external examiner reports, and met senior management and teaching staff to assess the College's adherence to delegated operational standards.

1.11   Programme specifications are the responsibilities of the awarding bodies and organisation. These are expected to be communicated to students through the programme handbooks, which are also developed by the awarding bodies and organisation. The students the team met understood the provisions available for programme-specific information and the team was assured that the mechanisms in place for dissemination are adequate for this Expectation.

1.12   However, programme-level and course-level learning outcomes are not consistently available to teaching staff and students within the programme-specific documentation (see paragraph 3.9).

1.13   The review team concludes that the definitive programme documentation maintained by the College is complete and consistent, although programme specifications are not always available. Therefore Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.14   The degree-awarding bodies are responsible for ensuring that the awards offered at the College adhere to this Expectation. Currently the programmes at the College are awarded by the University of Greenwich, CCCU and Pearson, the latter commencing in November 2014. Memoranda of Agreement are in place with both universities, with clear responsibilities checklists in place. The awarding bodies and organisation take responsibility for this Expectation.

1.15   All programmes have been through the validation process specified by the awarding bodies and organisation. There is clear guidance for this process. Programmes awarded by the University of Greenwich adhere to the standards set out in the Memorandum of Agreement, Academic Regulations and the Quality Assurance Handbook. The Diploma in Education and Training is delivered collaboratively with CCCU, as laid out in the Memorandum of Agreement and responsibilities checklist.

1.16   The programme approval processes for partner institutions are laid out in the memoranda of agreement with the awarding bodies, and the University of Greenwich Quality Assurance Handbook and Academic Regulations, which ensure the setting of the awards at the approval stage at the correct level on the FHEQ. To take some ownership of the programmes, the College has a Higher Education Action Team (HEAT) with terms of reference to monitor the provision.

1.17   The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's processes by examining programme handbooks, the University of Greenwich partner periodic review report, relevant committee minutes, the College's operating procedures and partnership agreement. The team also met relevant staff from the College to discuss the process and partnership staff from the University of Greenwich and CCCU.

1.18   The team concludes that the College is fulfilling its responsibilities in meeting the Expectation. Therefore Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.19   The awarding bodies and organisation are responsible for the setting of learning outcomes at module and programme level, while the College has responsibility for ensuring that these learning outcomes are assessed appropriately. The processes for setting learning outcomes at the correct level are laid down in the University of Greenwich Academic Regulations and the Quality Assurance Handbook, and the CCCU's Quality Manual and Assessment Procedures Manual. Learning outcomes at module (course) level are described in the programme handbooks in the specifications for the Foundation Degrees in Venues, Events and Hospitality; and Supporting Learning and Teaching and the Diploma in Education and Training, but not at overall programme level.

1.20   The College uses the awarding bodies' and organisation's processes to ensure the appropriate assessment of module and programme learning outcomes. There is no reference to a separate College assessment strategy or procedure, but there is a College internal moderation and verification procedure covering all programmes at the College. The assessment process is described in the Student Handbook, together with information on types of assessment and submission, and guidelines on referencing and plagiarism. Programme handbooks seen also include information on assessment and the process for moderation, including grading criteria.

1.21   The review team met relevant staff from the College to discuss the process, and partnership staff from the University of Greenwich and CCCU. It also read module and programme-level documentation.

1.22   The team found that, while programme learning outcomes are clearly delineated at the time of validation, they could be made more easily accessible to students and staff at the College, (see paragraph 3.9) but that, overall, from the evidence presented, the team concludes that the Expectation is met in full and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.23   Both awarding bodies set out clearly the processes for monitoring and review of provision at the College in the Memoranda of Agreement, the CCCU Quality Manual and University of Greenwich Quality Assurance Handbook. The monitoring and review process is based on annual monitoring at programme level, including student feedback and consideration of external examiner reports and programme data. The Higher Education Coordinator compiles an Annual Institutional Report (AIR) for the University of Greenwich provision, with key points noted for action in the College Higher Education Action Plan.

1.24   Both awarding bodies operate quinquennial periodic reviews, which have been triggered in recent years for the Foundation Degrees in Venues, Events and Hospitality, and Supporting Learning and Teaching. Within the College, HEAT is chaired by the Principal and is tasked with monitoring the higher education provision. Minutes from HEAT meetings viewed by the review team are brief and would benefit from demonstrating a more evaluative approach to discussion of annual programme monitoring reports.

1.25   During the visit the review team tested this expectation in meetings with staff and students, including staff from the two awarding bodies. Students confirmed that the representatives give student feedback in the annual programme monitoring process, and teaching staff confirmed their annual input. Minutes of HEAT also demonstrate staff input to the process.

1.26   The team concludes that the College follows the requirement to monitor and review its programmes. Therefore Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.27   The awarding bodies have detailed processes for the use of independent external expertise during the approval/validation of new programmes, contained in the University of Greenwich Quality Assurance Handbook and the CCCU's Assessment Procedures Manual. Currently the College depends on the CCCU's processes and does not formally use an internal process of seeking independent external expertise when considering the development of its higher education provision.

1.28   All programmes have external examiners (external verifier in the case of the Pearson-validated HNC/D) in place, appointed by the awarding body with no input from the College. The University of Greenwich External Examiner's Handbook is detailed regarding the role of external examiners in confirming that UK threshold academic standards are set and achieved. External examiner reports seen by the review team are on the relevant template and report as prescribed by the awarding bodies.

1.29   The review team tested this expectation in meetings with senior and academic staff, including staff from the two universities. It also read documents such as validation reports.

1.30   From the evidence presented the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.31   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.32   The College is clear regarding its responsibilities to maintain academic standards of awards on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies and awarding organisation. It relies on the procedures in the quality handbooks provided.

1.33   All Expectations are met and the associated level of risk is low. Therefore, the team's judgement is that, regarding the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and the awarding organisation the College **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval*

Findings

2.1   The College's strategic plan and higher education strategy set out an intention to deliver higher education provision which meets the need of individuals, employers and the community. To this end the College has worked with two awarding bodies and an awarding organisation, Pearson, to offer franchised foundation degrees and diplomas and an off-the-shelf HNC, respectively.

2.2   The design, development and approval of the higher education programmes at the College is the responsibility of the awarding bodies and organisation. Responsibility for setting and maintaining academic standards once programmes are approved, and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities is a joint responsibility with the awarding bodies, largely operated through adherence to the relevant awarding body quality processes and academic regulations. With Pearson awards, the College is able to select and approve units designed by the awarding organisation.

2.3   The review team viewed documentation relating to programme design and approval, including the external development plan, HEAT meeting minutes and programme submission documentation, together with the staff training record and training evaluation data. The team met senior managers and academic staff and discussed the College's input to design and approval of the programmes. Although staff confirmed that they understood the awarding bodies' frameworks and academic regulations, and that these were adhered to in programme implementation, the team found that there was less acquaintance with the Quality Code and the *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark.*

2.4   The College is about to seek approval for three foundation degree programmes with London South Bank University and CCCU and four HNC/Ds with Pearson.

2.5   The College works effectively with the awarding bodies and organisation to discharge the limited responsibilities it has for the design, development and approval of programmes. Overall, the team concludes that this Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission*

Findings

2.6   The College is responsible for the recruitment, selection and admission process of students on its higher education programmes. Each programme has its own set of entry criteria. Responsibility for recruitment and selection of applicants, including delivery of interviews, is devolved to the Programme Leader. The College Admissions Policy clearly outlines the specific process for admissions. One awarding body (CCCU), in its review of the provision, commended the College on the transparency and inclusiveness of its admissions process.

2.8   The review team reviewed relevant admissions documentation, including College policies and applicant information, met teaching and support staff who participate in the admissions process and asked students about their application experience. Staff are aware of the selection criteria and feel adequately trained and supported throughout the process to fulfil their responsibilities. Responsibilities of support and teaching staff are communicated effectively. The overall process takes account of the diverse background of applicants and is supportive of part-time, mature students. Students are made aware of the demands made upon them.

2.9   For the Foundation Degree in Supporting Teaching and Learning, current employment in a relevant field is an entry requirement. Recognition of prior learning is available and one student whom the team met had been admitted through that route.

2.10   Recruitment, selection and admission procedures are fair, transparent, valid and inclusive and there are reliable structures in place. Clear and effective mechanisms for communicating with applicants throughout all stages of recruitment have been established to identify to the applicant the progress and outcome of their application. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.11   The College does not have a learning and teaching strategy for its higher education provision, but relies on the awarding bodies' and organisation's strategies. There is a College-wide Learning and Teaching Strategy, which is predominately focused on further education. This is currently under review and was not available to the review team. The self-evaluation document submitted by the College as part of this review makes no reference to strategies for work-based learning with reference to this Expectation (see paragraph 2.25).

2.12   Student expectations are outlined in the Programme Handbooks, which are provided by the awarding bodies and organisation. There are details of weekly sessions and additional locally provided support, particularly the Learning Resource Centre and student workshops. More information is outlined in the Higher Education Handbook. All students are provided with these two documents at the start of their studies to ensure parity of opportunity and experience. The students who met the review team acknowledged their handbooks as the main signposting resource to learning and support opportunities.

2.13   All teaching staff are expected to have qualifications at an appropriate level upon appointment. There is a minimum requirement for appointing staff to teach on higher education programmes. New staff are mentored by the Head of Higher Education. Teaching staff are encouraged to undertake continued professional development opportunities, such as staff training workshops provided internally and by the awarding bodies. The review team saw the full staff development record and the College notes that these activities are reflected on through staff annual appraisal systems. Staff development informally feeds into College action plans and annual reports.

2.14   Teaching staff are informally encouraged to engage in scholarly activities, such as studying for postgraduate qualifications and doctoral degrees. Support can be provided either through remission from other duties or financial support. Two teaching staff are registered for PhDs, but there was little evidence of any other higher education activities beyond training and updating, and there is no formal process for developing this. The team **recommends** that the College formalises higher education staff development beyond the current training opportunities to ensure that learning and teaching practices are informed by subject-specific scholarship.

2.15   It was recommended in the previous QAA review report that a higher education teaching observation system be established. The College senior management team highlighted that this recommendation was researched thoroughly with the intention of implementation but proposed structures were not appropriate as higher education teaching staff also teach on further education programmes. The College decided not to implement the recommendation, leaving the institution without higher education teaching observation arrangements. Findings of the desk-based research and justification not to implement an observation system were only available to the review team through anecdotal accounts. It is **recommended** that the College develops a teaching observation process more related to higher education.

2.16   The team reviewed relevant documentation, participated in presentations and self-exploration of virtual learning spaces and the staff intranet, and met staff and students to consider the learning environments available at the College. Staff noted the recent changes to improve the student virtual learning environment (VLE) in preparation for release to students in September 2015. The Learning Resource Centre was also positively received by students who felt the resources available were adequate for their learning needs.

2.17   The review team makes two recommendations, one concerning making the teaching observation process more related to higher education (as recommended in the previous (2010) review report) and providing opportunities for staff development relating to higher education subject-specific scholarship. Nevertheless, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.18   Upon application, the College encourages students to declare any additional support needs and adjustments, with the process outlined in the Learning Support Policy. However, there is currently no reference to this process in any handbook despite the handbooks being widely acknowledged as the main resource for student information (see paragraph 3.9).

2.19   Higher Education Study Skills Workshops provided by student support teams were highlighted by staff and students as particularly effective in supporting the student learning experience. In addition to the scheduled sessions, the timetable has been created to respond to identified student needs. The use of drop-in sessions provides a mechanism for individual study support and inclusivity. The review team identifies the regular higher education Study Skills Workshops as **good practice**.

2.20   The College's learning resources are well managed. In particular, there is careful monitoring and evaluation of library use. Learning resource managers maintain close links with teaching staff to ensure that books, journals and online materials are available to enable students to achieve their learning outcomes. The College has established a specialist Higher Education Centre. This provides students with quiet study areas and access to computers. It is well equipped and appreciated by students.

2.21   The VLE demonstration indicated the College is taking steps to enhance it. Some programme sections are more developed than others but it was explained that this is a work in progress, with an identified delivery plan to complete development by September 2015. The College also indicated that programme information, such as external examiner reports would be made available to student through this channel. The team **affirms** the progress with the VLE.

2.22   Careers information and guidance is disseminated through multiple means, through handbooks signposting provision by the awarding bodies, in the prospectus highlighting Learning Resource Centre support and collaboration with external national careers services. Students were positive about the services offered by the careers service.

2.23   The self-evaluation document makes no reference to work-based learning under this Expectation. One key aspect of foundation degree programmes is the requirement to provide work-based learning opportunities. The Diploma in Education and Training is a well-established example of embedded work-based learning, as it requires students to be employed and currently working in the subject field, and this requirement is clearly communicated to students upon application and throughout their studies. This is not the case with regard to other foundation degrees which require work-based learning opportunities through placements.

2.24   Work placements have not been required to date as students requiring this experience have all been in employment. However, full-time students now make up more than a third of the student population. Placement opportunities and employer details have been identified should the need arise but there is no indication that these opportunities are advertised to students unless employment circumstances change or student reach a work-based learning element in their programme. Students on the Foundation Degree in

Venues, Hospitality and Events stated that they were unsure how work-based learning is assessed.

2.25   Embedded work-based study in existing employment requires support and input from the employer. The College has developed health and safety forms for employers to complete but acknowledged uptake was low. No guidance is provided to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of students/employers in work settings, which may have an impact on student perception and employer engagement with the College. No definitions are available in student-facing documentation to outline the different work-based learning and placement terminology, nor is the terminology used consistently across the College.

2.26   The review team **recommends** that the College develop and implement a process for the management and evaluation of work-based learning, including outlining roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

2.27   Given that currently half of the provision is based on foundation degrees with the need to provide work-based learning, the College needs to manage and evaluate this mode of learning. It also needs to outline roles and responsibilities. This will become more important since the College also intends to recruit to four more foundation degrees in 2015-16. Therefore, the Expectation is met but the level of associated risk is moderate because the College does not have a process for managing and evaluating work-based learning which forms a key part of the foundation degree provision.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.28   Student representative structures exist across all programmes, with information on election processes made available to students through their programme handbook and highlighted by the Programme Leader. Training is provided through the College Student Support Services and roles and responsibilities of student representatives outlined in the training documentation. Monthly meetings are facilitated to connect and support student representatives across all programmes.

2.29   Student feedback is sought individually through online student experience evaluation surveys. Link tutors meet students during the academic year to discuss programme-specific provisions, which provides a clear channel to the University, and a strong connection with the Programme Leader encourages ongoing reflection and feedback.

2.30   The review team met teaching and support staff to evaluate the extent to which the student voice is heard throughout College structures, including representatives of Student Support Services, and students directly, both student representatives and non-representatives, to gather views from the student body.

2.31   Students made positive reference to representative channels, noting that they are a positive mechanism for raising concerns but infrequently used. The student representatives whom the team met spoke positively of the College's engagement with students and felt adequately supported to fulfil their role. Support staff and students alike only made reference to the monthly representative meetings and were not aware of other meeting participation availability with College structures.

2.32   The student survey system has recently changed to fully online delivery, which has correlated with a decrease in student response. Students were keen for alternative communication methods to be explored and support staff noted that they were looking into strategies to improve uptake. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to improve student survey response rates.

2.33   The College takes deliberate steps to engage students individually and collectively as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their learning experiences. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

Findings

2.34   The process and procedures for assessment are undertaken in conjunction with the University of Greenwich Assessment and Feedback Policy, the CCCU's Assessment Procedures Manual and Pearson's guidelines. The College does not have a higher education assessment strategy based on these policies. The current College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy for further education was not available for scrutiny by the review team; the documentation had been taken down from the website as it was being revised during the review visit. Staff training to ensure they are able to carry out their roles regarding assessment was undertaken in 2013-14 with the University of Greenwich and in the recorded in staff training.

2.35   Assessments for the CCCU programmes are prepared by the University and standardised across all programmes. Assessment on the Foundation Degree in Supporting Learning and Teaching is prepared by the University in conjunction with the College and then detailed in the overarching programme handbook. The College teaching team has more responsibility for assessment on the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management, which is then agreed with the University prior to being given out to students. An advisable recommendation from the previous QAA review was to review the management of the moderation process. The detailed College Internal Moderation/ Verification procedure now applies to all its higher education programmes and is used in conjunction with the requirements of the awarding bodies' and organisation's specific requirements for marking, moderation and internal verification. Programme handbooks include the detail of assessment, including the learning outcomes for each module in the course specifications and generic grading criteria, but few include programme-level learning outcomes.

2.36   Students confirmed that they receive information about the assessment process, including detail on assessment tasks, deadlines, criteria, mitigating circumstances, late hand-in and plagiarism. Students also confirmed that they received formative and summative assessment in a timely fashion, which helped them to improve subsequent work, that they were aware of the levels of learning and that they were encouraged to develop autonomy during their programme of study.

2.37   Assessment outcomes are reported to Assessment Boards operated by the awarding bodies and attended by external examiners and staff from the College.

2.38   The accreditation of prior learning is managed by the programme leaders through the awarding bodies' policies and regulations on the university programmes. There are clear assessment guidelines for staff from the awarding bodies and organisation. Recognition of accreditation of prior learning and experience is not mentioned in the College Admissions Policy, the Higher Education and Access Courses Prospectus or on the website. However, there is reference to the process in the handbook for Applied Professional Studies and an application form in the programme handbook for the Foundation Degree in Supporting Teaching and Learning. Only one student the team met had made use of this process.

2.39   The College operates assessments processes in line with the awarding bodies' and organisation's regulations. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.40   Awarding bodies are responsible for appointing external examiners and Pearson provides its own verifier. There are guidelines for external examining in the handbooks provided by these bodies. External examiner reports are on the relevant template and report as prescribed in the handbooks. As franchised programmes, responses to the external examiner reports are made by the University, not the College.

2.41   During the visit the review team tested this Expectation in meetings with academic staff and students. It also scrutinised external examiner reports for all programmes and the responses to them. The 2013-14 external examiner report for the Diploma in Education and Training and the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management confirm the appropriate nature of the assessment process, noting in particular the close and supportive link tutor on the former and the feedback to students and the 'robust' moderation on the latter. The 2013-14 report for the Foundation Degree in Supporting Learning and Teaching covers the three partner colleges delivering the programme, but does note College-specific issues. While there are some reservations expressed in the report regarding the College's progress from the 2012-13 report, the external examiner also confirms the appropriate nature of the assessment process in assuring standards. The review team found that improvements are being made as required in the current academic year in conjunction with the university link tutor.

2.42   The Pearson external verifier makes an annual visit to the College. The external examiners for the remaining programmes visit each delivery college on a rolling basis, hence the students do not necessarily meet the external examiner in any given year. This was confirmed by the students, who also confirmed that they had access to hard copies of the external examiner reports for their programmes, and the programme representatives were aware of the reports being discussed at programme committee meetings. Not all the reports are currently available on the VLE, but this is planned for the near future.

2.43   In consultation with the College, it is the responsibility of the awarding bodies to respond to the external examiners. In the report for 2013-14, the external examiner for the Foundation Degree in Supporting Teaching and Learning commented that issues regarding suggestions for improvement in the previous report (2012-13) had not been completed by the College. These have now been addressed. Any other matters noted in other external reports are addressed by the awarding bodies and by the College through HEAT and considered in programme committees.

2.44   With its awarding bodies and organisation, the College makes scrupulous use of external examiner reports. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.45   The College adheres to the processes for monitoring and review laid out in the memoranda of agreement and quality processes by the awarding bodies and organisation. The two awarding bodies have slightly different processes but monitoring and review involves the College programme leaders completing an annual report addressing the sections laid down in the respective quality process, including the student voice and experience.

2.46   Both universities operate a periodic programme review process. For CCCU this comprises an annual review of the partnership and a consortium review of the whole programme. For the University of Greenwich provision, quinquennial reviews take place on all programmes, unless concerns are raised. For example, there was a review of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management which took place in November 2012.

2.47   The team scrutinised programme monitoring reports, annual review meeting minutes, programme committee minutes and the annual institutional report for the University of Greenwich provision. The team also met students and senior and academic staff, who confirmed the annual review process is used and includes student input to the annual review process.

2.48   The College's annual monitoring reports are generally fit for purpose and used across the College's higher education programmes. The team did find that the evaluation of completion and progression data lacked rigour and was not consistent across all programmes (see paragraph 3.10).

2.49   The College meets the requirements of its awarding bodies and organisation in monitoring and evaluating its programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.50   The responsibility checklists all state that the responsibility for the management of student complaints rests with the College, with individual responsibility resting with the Director of Quality and Standards. The awarding bodies are responsible for appeals. The College complaints and appeals procedures are not available via the website, but there is a complaints section in the customer service online feedback form which can be used by applicants.

2.51   The individual programme handbooks and generic Higher Education Student handbook deal with complaints and appeals inconsistently. The Handbook for the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management advises students to follow the College procedure for complaints and the University process for appeals. The handbook for the Foundation Degree in Supporting Learning and Teaching refers to the College's complaints and appeals procedures with no reference to the awarding body. The Handbook for the Foundation Degree in Applied Professional Studies makes no reference to complaints and appeals at all. HNC/D students are directed to the College's own Complaints and Appeals procedures, which are appended in the Programme Handbook. The generic Higher Education Student Handbook, which is applicable to all students, does not refer to the College's policies on complaints and appeals. And the website makes no reference to these policies either.

2.52   The review team tested the College's approach to student appeals and complaints through meetings with students, professional support staff, senior staff, academic staff, and representatives from the awarding bodies. Students noted that they were not aware of any complaints being made, but thought the necessary information was contained in their handbooks, while teaching staff felt that the individual support given to students ensured that any potential complaints were dealt with at an early stage and did not progress to the formal process. There was some confusion evidenced by support staff regarding the progression of complaints at the formal stage to the awarding body or to the College's governing body.

2.53   Overall the review team found that, while the processes themselves are sound, there is inconsistency in the information available to staff and students regarding complaints and appeals. However, the team concludes that the Expectation is met, and the associated level of risk is low (see also paragraph 3.3).

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.54   Currently, over half of the students are on the College's foundation degrees. Foundation degrees are designed to integrate academic and work-based learning through close collaboration between employers and programme providers. The College is, therefore, responsible for facilitating and supporting these student learning opportunities, especially through managing its relationship with employers and for students' work-based placements.

2.55   The College commented that mechanisms had been developed to support the identification and implementation of placements, if required. However, to date these had not been used as no students have required placements. This process includes visiting placement employers and carrying out relevant Health and Safety reviews, conducted through the College Placement Officer, but is not carried out for existing employers. While a document to be completed by the student and identifying the name of their current employer has been generated, Employer Guidance detailing roles and responsibilities, and acknowledging acceptance of the student's work based learning opportunity, has not been developed to support both placement and existing employer relationships.

2.56   The team scrutinised the relevant documentation, including the standardised employer health and safety forms, met staff and students and conducted a telephone interview with a local employer, although it transpired the latter provided employment opportunity talks for students rather than employment placements directly.

2.57   The College acknowledged that the current placement information had not yet been used as all students to this date had used existing work opportunities. It also stated that despite asking employers to fill out the relevant documentation, the responses to date had been poor. It was unfortunate that, despite a request from the review team to meet employers, the College was not able to make arrangements for employers to come to the College during the visit.

2.58   Students who met the review team were mainly employed, a mix of part and full-time. An example was raised of employment status changes and subsequent support provided by the College to begin identification of relevant placement opportunities. No examples of placement provision experience were available at time of the review visit.

2.59   Despite the College Higher Education Strategy highlighting local employer engagement as a strategic priority, there is no clear strategy for employer engagement. This includes initial identification, either as a new placement or development through an existing student employment arrangement, through to ongoing maintenance of the relationship. Neither are there any monitoring and evaluations of managing locations where students are placed to achieve learning outcomes.

2.60   The College has an extensive employer database for the Foundation Degree Venues, Events and Hospitality programme. It has identified that engagement with employers is in need of further development. As far back as November 2012, the Programme Approval/Review of this foundation degree made it a condition of approval that the College produces a clear strategy for the development and sustainment of employer

engagement. It also noted that there was no concrete endorsement from any companies regarding placements after the main company withdrew from the relationship.
The Programme Monitoring Report (September 2014) from the University of Greenwich noted that the College needed to expand its work placements and to enhance work-based learning practices. Given that most of its higher education provision is foundation degrees and that, starting in 2014, there was an intake of full-time students for the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality programme, the review team **recommends** that the College develops and implements a strategic approach for the involvement of employers in the higher education provision. This would then be in line with the *Foundation Degree Benchmark Statement.*

2.61   The review team concludes that the Expectation is not met because, given the present and future foundation degree provision, there is no clear strategy for employer engagement or any evaluation of employer links. The associated level of risk is high.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: High

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols.
This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.62   The College does not offer research degrees, therefore Expectation B11 is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.63   In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.64   Eight applicable Expectations have been met and risk is judged low in each case. One Expectation (B4) is met but with moderate risk. Another expectation (B10) is not met and there is a high level of risk.

2.64   Recommendations include providing a staff policy which is more focused on subject development in higher education rather than just training and updating, and producing a teaching observation process appropriate for higher education (as recommended in the previous QAA review report). Given that half of the provision is foundation degrees and that recruitment onto four new foundation degrees will start in 2015-16, the College is expected to have a process for the management and evaluation of work-based learning, including roles and responsibilities. It also needs to develop and implement a strategic approach for the involvement of employers in the higher education provision. Learning resources are appropriate and well managed, especially the Learning Resources Centre and its thorough monitoring of the use of the facilities. There are two affirmations, one for the development of the VLE and the other for progress being made to increase student response rates to questionnaires.

2.65   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning experiences **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, *Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision*

Findings

3.1   The College has developed a number of informal mechanisms for approving and monitoring information, involving members of the HEAT membership and the Higher Education Coordinator, and the Marketing Department for website and marketing content.

3.2   The team scrutinised a wide variety of materials, including the public website, internal intranet/information portals and VLE, student handbooks, and awarding bodies' quality assurance guidance and discussed this material with staff and student in meetings during the review visit.

3.3   There is no formal process by which information across the institution is created and reviewed. While the College asserts that the information provided to students is 'clear and robust', the review team encountered several examples of inaccurate and inaccessible information as noted in paragraph 2.51 (regarding appeals and complaints) and in paragraph 2.38 (regarding accreditation of prior learning and experience). In the light of these examples, and the issues raised below, the review team **recommends** that the College develops and implements a process that ensures information for higher education provision is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.4   For prospective students, employers and externals, the College's website is an important information resource. Since the 2010 QAA review, the website has been revised to improve the higher education section for prospective students. It now includes clarification that foundation degrees are qualifications in their own right and this information is also reflected in the newly developed higher education prospectus. Although the information for foundation degree programmes has improved, for example including explanations of the award level, the College also offers HNCs, diplomas and a foundation year programme. These awards do not have a similar level of explanation. Furthermore, the College identifies only the two awarding bodies in its public-facing information; Pearson is not mentioned. On the website, the Pearson programme is identified under 'Foundation Degrees' where the only logo visible is the University of Greenwich. This programme does not feature in the current version of the higher education prospectus (2014-15), although it has been running since November 2014. In the review team's view, therefore, the information provided by the College about its non-foundation degree provision is not fit for purpose, contributing to the recommendation set out above. The team notes that the College was recommended to improve information about the distinctions among different programmes and awards in the 2010 QAA review report.

3.5   The process by which students apply to programmes differs between subject, awarding body and study method (full or part-time). It is clearly articulated at each relevant stage of the website, along with programme leader information which is also available in the prospectus. Using the website as a signposting tool to the relevant application links appears to be an efficient method. This was confirmed by students in their meeting with the team.

3.6   Additional details are provided on the website to help applicants make informed choices and are displayed in a standardised format across all programmes. The College Senior Management Team describes plans to improve the information provided to applicants, such as through making the programme handbooks available on the College website, planned for implementation in 2015-16.

3.7   Some of the claims made in the promotional activity is not referenced or supported by evidence, for example, 'widely recognised in the NHS' (p 10) and 'many of our students find themselves in employment/university'. The College noted that a strong mission and aim for the provision is to engage with the local community and provide learning opportunities which reflect these values. This is reflected in the newly published 2020 College strategy available via the College website which clearly outlines performance indicators for achieving such.

3.8   Programme-level outcomes are agreed at validation by the awarding bodies and are included in their programme handbooks. The College does not include clear programme learning outcomes for all programmes in its own information, although the awarding bodies hold the College accountable to these academic quality standards as a measure of success of the provision, which is reported on annually. There is a supplementary handbook to provide the College context. To ensure that the quality standards of academic provisions meet the intended learning outcomes, the review team **recommends** that programme learning outcomes are made more explicit to staff and students, which may require processes of retrieval from the awarding bodies.

3.9   Development of a placement/work-based learning handbook was a recommendation in the last QAA review report. This recommendation is particularly relevant to foundation degree students. It has not been completed. Conflicting information was provided to the team about the stage of handbook development. Upon request, a draft was presented during the visit which was discovered to be from another higher education provider without reference to origin. The College's title had been substituted for the original provider in all but one place. This document was withdrawn and a replacement presented. This was, in some parts, similar to the first document. The team recognises that these documents were drafts and not yet circulated to students, staff or employers. However, both rely on the document of another institution. As such, they do not provide sufficient information which relates to the College's provision. As it is, students, staff and employers do not have a placement handbook. Moreover, the documents have not been through a process of discussion and development. The review team **recommends** that a placement/ work-based learning handbook be developed and provided to students and employers.

3.10   Progression and destination data is a requirement of franchised provisions for the College, as outlined in the collaborative arrangements quality handbooks. Progression data within each programme is collected and reported to awarding bodies in annual programme reviews. However, progression from foundation degrees to University top-up awards and employment destination data are not gathered or evaluated. For example, the Foundation Year Science Programme Monitoring Report notes that 'all learners progressed into undergraduate programmes', but there was no evidence for this. Destination data is not formally evaluated at programme levels. College staff reported that data is not easily obtained. The review team **recommends** that the College develops processes for monitoring and evaluating destination data, especially for Foundation Degree top-up awards.

3.11   There are inconsistencies and gaps in the provision of information about appeals and complaints, accreditation of prior learning and experience, Pearson programmes, the Placement Handbook, and destination and progression to top-up awards data. There is an ineffective informal system for checking information. Therefore, the Expectation is not met and the associated level of risk is serious because there is no identified systematic process

for ensuring that the information published is accurate. There are significant gaps in policy, structures and procedures.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Serious

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.12   In reaching its judgment the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.13   Expectation C is not met and the level of risk is serious. There are four recommendations associated with the expectation: that the College develops and implements a process that ensures information for higher education provision is accurate, accessible and trustworthy; that it provides a placement/work-based learning handbook; ensures that programme outcomes are made more explicit; and develops the process for monitoring and evaluating destination data, including foundation degree 'top-up' awards.

3.14   The review team concludes that the wide range of errors and inconsistencies in the information available to both students and the general public across a range of media is serious because there is no identified systematic process for ensuring that the information published is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. There are significant gaps in policy, structures or procedures. The review team concludes that the quality of the information produced by the College about its provision is not fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy and thus **does not meet** UK expectations.

4   Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1   The College's mission statement and strategic aims focus on enhancing life chances and putting learning and support at the forefront in all actions. The Higher Education Strategy notes that the College 'is instrumental in providing the local community with the skills and qualifications necessary to move into employment and further and higher education and has structured its provision to reflect areas of demand for skills and the needs of the local communities it serves'.

4.2   The Higher Education Strategy notes that enhancement of flexible and blended delivery modes, including part-time and evening delivery, embraces all types of learner, and meets the needs of employers and the local community. The Table of Actions from the Higher Education Strategy covers a range of practical issues but does not discuss enhancement as such. The HEAT terms of reference note the team's responsibility for the overall strategic plan, including to 'approve and monitor capital bids/projects that support quality improvements and use of ILT in the curriculum'. HEAT minutes from meetings in May and June 2014, and the HEAT Higher Education Issues Action Plan do not contain reference to enhancement or the identification and dissemination of good practice, rather reporting on more practical issues, such as the establishment of specific higher education facilities.

4.3   The College's membership of the Pan-London Peer Review and Development Group provides some opportunities to share good practice, with the January 2013 report noting the usefulness of the Peer Review Development work undertaken in the development of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management.

4.4   The review team met senior, professional support and teaching staff to discuss their understanding of enhancement. Staff were unsure about the meaning of enhancement or the importance of a systematic, deliberate approach. In addition, the review team did not see evidence of how the College uses its quality assurance processes to drive enhancement, despite there being some examples of enhancement. There are some examples of practice which the College notes as improvements to the provision. However, there is a lack of a deliberate and systematic approach that would drive an enhancement agenda. For these reasons, the review team **recommends** that the College takes deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

4.5   Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is not met and the associated level of risk is moderate because there is some evidence of enhancement but the College does not take deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning.

Expectation: Not Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.6   In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.7   The Expectation in this area requires improvement and risk is judged moderate with one recommendation: that the College should take deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

4.8   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Findings

5.1 The College is proud of its student engagement in the quality assurance and enhancement of learning opportunities and identified this as an area of strength in their higher education student experience. The review team found evidence of well established student representation mechanisms and strong links between students and their Programme Leader through informal interactions. Given the diversity of the student demographic, including representation of minority ethnic groups who may find typical UK student engagement methods intimidating or may be less forthcoming in giving feedback, the widespread acknowledgement that these mechanisms exist and are positively received by the student community is encouraging. However, the College acknowledges that these mechanisms could be better used and that it has more work to do, particularly with student survey engagement. Staff who met the review team appeared committed to ensuring use of the student voice is enhanced across the College structures.

5.2 Teaching staff appeared positive and committed to student involvement at programme level, building a strong professional and pastoral relationship with students. It is through this internal partnership that concerns and feedback are addressed promptly and the student voice can be effectively represented through programme monitoring reports and internal higher education committees. This is indicative of the size of higher education provision at the College, as agility and responsiveness are easier when provisions and student numbers are small.

5.3 Outcomes of student feedback are discussed at staff team meetings and inform wider College action plans, which are lead by the same team. There is no annual monitoring of the effectiveness of the student voice or thematic analysis of issues raised during the academic year to monitor progress. Actions arising from student feedback is commutated to the student community through class representatives and programme leaders.

5.4 Overall, the College has implemented a solid foundation for student involvement and it is clear the College values its students' contributions. This being said, the mechanisms are at times ad hoc and it is not clear these will scale in line with projected student recruitment aspirations. There is little evidence to suggest innovation within these feedback channels or concerted effort to ensure that the diverse student voice is equally represented, yet this may also be symptomatic of the cohort size. Enthusiasm evidenced through the staff teams should be built on to improve and sustain student engagement longer.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 29-32 of the Higher Education Review handbook

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

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

Award
A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Blended learning
Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-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 (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning
A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.
See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award
The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning

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 our review processes.

Expectations
Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.
See also **distance learning**.

Framework
A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

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* (FHEQIS).

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 audit and review processes.

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.

Multiple awards
An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition
A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

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

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

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

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.

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.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard
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** and **subject benchmark statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)
An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation
Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.