



# Higher Education Review of Bexley College

April 2015

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Bexley College. The review took place from 20 to 22 April 2015 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Amanda Broughton
- Dr Hayley Randle
- Mr Benjamin Hunt (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Bexley 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)<sup>1</sup> 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 5.

In reviewing Bexley 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,<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review](#)<sup>4</sup> 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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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code)

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Review themes: [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106)

<sup>3</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us).

<sup>4</sup> Higher Education Review web pages: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review)

## Key findings

### QAA's judgements about Bexley College

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Good practice

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

- The comprehensive and cohesive range of support that enables students to achieve their academic, personal and professional potential (Expectations B4 and B3).

### Recommendations

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

By December 2015:

- Consolidate and articulate the existing strategic approach to the enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities at higher education level (Enhancement)

### Theme: Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The College has a number of mechanisms to involve students in quality assurance and enhancement. It is committed to involving all students, although this can sometimes be a challenge for those on part-time provision. Feedback is gathered from students via questionnaires and student forums as well as through the student representative system. Student representatives are involved in course committees and have opportunities to attend committees where programme monitoring reports are approved. The College is continuing to introduce new initiatives such as the higher education conference to further increase student involvement.

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

## About Bexley College

Bexley College (the College) is a general further education college that also offers higher education. The College has two campuses, Erith and Holly Hill. The College's mission is 'to provide outstanding education and training in an inclusive, creative and supportive environment where all students, regardless of their background, can gain the skills and confidence to achieve their full potential'.

The College's strategic plan has an overarching aim for higher education which is to continue to expand higher education with the University of Greenwich (the University) to increase participation through a high quality offer and to develop further foundation degrees to enhance opportunities and widen participation.

The College has a separate Higher Education Strategy which sets out its ambitions relating to its higher education provision are to provide a high quality learning and teaching experience; provide a range of opportunities that meet student and employer needs and complement the courses available at local higher education institutions; to deliver higher education in an efficient and sustainable way and to raise aspirations and improve progression into higher education.

The College was founded as a technical institute in 1907, and has been delivering higher education for over 70 years. The College has 174 students and offers a Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care; a Foundation Degree in Computing and an Higher National Certificate (HNC)/Higher National Diploma (HND) in Building Studies.

The College seeks to widen access to and participation in higher education by inspiring local people, particularly those under-represented at this level, to achieve their full potential through flexible and accessible provision.

The number of higher education students has decreased since the previous QAA review, the Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER), from 250 on higher education programmes in 2011 to 174 in 2015. The FdA Salon Management (part-time) and HND Business courses are no longer offered.

The roles and responsibilities for the management of higher education at the College have changed since the IQER. At the time of the previous QAA visit, the manager responsible for higher education had a broad remit, which also included business development and partnership working and complementary curriculum (school links). This remit was considered to be too broad. Therefore, the College took the decision to divide the role into a post which focused on higher education and access provision and a new post of Head of Employer/Partnership Development. This strategic decision was to consolidate the responsibility for the area, to facilitate a unique higher education ethos into the structure of the curriculum and was based on the College's mission to improve the quality of the higher education provision and expand into new areas.

In September 2014 the College moved to a brand new building in the heart of Erith and this has helped re-market the provision and raise the profile of higher education. However, the College acknowledges that there is still work to be done in changing the perception of the College being focused entirely on further education provision. In order to raise awareness of progression from level 3 courses to higher education at the College, in September 2014 the HNC/HND Building Studies programmes were moved to the construction campus, Holly Hill, and therefore this subject area was based at the same location.

The College aims to develop its higher education provision and meet local needs. However, as previously stated, one challenge is that the College tends to be viewed by the local population as primarily being a provider of further education and consequently there is a lack of awareness within the local schools of the higher education offer. To address this, the Head of Higher Education has presented to the Head Teachers' Forum, the local council and directly to year 13 pupils at one of the local schools. In order to continue to raise awareness, there is a marketing presence at all events such as open evenings/days; parents evenings; attendance at University open days, and the Higher Education Fair. In addition to this, the Head of Higher Education addresses all College Level 3 provision directly to explain and promote the internal opportunities for higher education.

Cohorts on some programmes are relatively small and this can be a financial challenge. However, where possible, Bexley College is committed to maintaining realistic fees in order to widen participation. The College may face additional competition from other providers in the future and potential threats and opportunities in terms of student recruitment.

The College commenced its relationship with the University in 1999. During 2012 the College was successful in securing directly funded provision from HEFCE with the allocation of 53 places for the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care (Care and Early Years) and the HND Building Studies programme. These students are recruited to a programme using the University's protocols and the University has approved the delivery at the College of a University award for which HEFCE student numbers are allocated solely to the College.

Over the next five years the College seeks to continue to expand its partnership with the University to include greater progression routes for level 3 students and to promote internal progression into higher education.

The College had its last QAA review, IQER, in 2011. That review identified three features of good practice, four advisable and three desirable recommendations. The College has responded to the last review through its quality improvement plan and action plan, with monitoring through quality review meetings and annual monitoring reports.

The College has continued to focus on the areas of good practice from the previous review and respond to the recommendations. For example, a Higher Education Strategy has been put in place and staff members have participated in dedicated staff development. The Head of Higher Education and the marketing department hold regular meetings to examine published information to ensure it is accurate and up to date.

The College has developed a Higher Education Forum to ensure the best possible student experience and to make more extensive use of student feedback on programme and assessment design in order to further develop academic standards. The College now incorporates external examiner feedback within the programme monitoring reports that are produced for the University and are integral to annual programme review and action planning.

## Explanation of the findings about Bexley 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 College works in partnership with one awarding body, the University of Greenwich (the University) and therefore the bulk of the quality assurance is monitored by them using the University's processes. The University maintains responsibility for the standards of the awards on the three programmes the College delivers and ensures that programmes are designed in compliance with *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). The University ensures that learning outcomes are aligned to the appropriate level of the FHEQ, that qualification awards are based on the achievement of these learning outcomes, and that they take account of qualification characteristics. These procedures enable the Expectation A1 to be met in theory.

1.2 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined the effectiveness of the College's approach to developing programmes and the inclusion of Subject Benchmark Statements through consideration of the College's Strategic Plan, validations and revalidations, programme specifications, review of handbooks, definitive documents and external examiner reports. The team also held meetings with College staff members and representatives from the University.

1.3 An effective working relationship with the University enables the College to comply with the processes for aligning learning outcomes and awards with qualification descriptors. The responsibility for ensuring that qualifications are set at the appropriate level of the FHEQ rests with the University, though the College makes reference to the FHEQ and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements in the preparation of programme documentation for validation and revalidation events.

1.4 The College uses the University validation process and franchise arrangements to develop programmes aligned to relevant qualification Subject Benchmark Statements. The content and assessment strategies are at the appropriate level and cover all learning outcomes. College staff are supported in their understanding and application of credit frameworks and are familiar with the FHEQ through University and College staff development, support from the relevant University link tutor and contact with external examiners.

1.5 The review team concludes that programmes at the College are set at the correct level and take account of qualification descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements. Therefore, Expectation A1 is met 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**

1.6 The University sets and maintains the overall academic standards of the delegated provision. The College is responsible for delivering provision and the assessment of learning and teaching as outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement between the University and the College. The College is required to follow the guidance and procedures in the University's Quality Assurance Handbook to ensure that academic standards are fully maintained. The College is also required to adhere to the University requirements in designing, developing, assessing, monitoring and reviewing programmes. The academic governance arrangements are clear and the College processes comply with the requirements of the University. Therefore, these processes enable Expectation A2.1 to be met in theory.

1.7 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered the partnership agreement, validation arrangements, programme monitoring arrangements and the College committees' terms of reference. The team also held meetings with College staff and University representatives.

1.8 Liaison between the College and the University occurs at different levels of the College from the Principal to the curriculum teams with the Head of Higher Education being the central point of contact. The College has an effective and comprehensive structure of internal meetings that monitor academic standards. The relationship between the College and the University is monitored rigorously through the programme committees, which are attended by the individual University link tutors, and the Higher Education Forum. The Higher Education Forum meets three times a year and is attended by all link tutors and the Principal of the College. The Academic Board oversees the quality of provision across the College including the higher education programmes and the steps the College is taking to improve the quality of student learning opportunities. Quality reviews are held termly and used to receive and scrutinise all quality assurance documentation required by the University including the Programme Monitoring Reports (PMR), the Annual Institutional Report (AIR) and the actions taken to address external examiner reports.

1.9 Links to the University guidance are included in programme handbooks and through the virtual learning environment (VLE). The programme-definitive documents are compiled in accordance with the University regulations and effectively monitored and updated as required.

1.10 The review team concludes that there are robust mechanisms in place to fulfil the Expectation and the College demonstrates a clear understanding of its responsibilities. The College's clear governance and management procedures are effective. The College's role in communicating and adhering to the academic governance arrangements, assessment regulations and the frameworks of the University ensures that Expectation A2.1 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**

**Findings**

1.11 The responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the definitive documents is clearly outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement and Quality Assurance Handbook. It is the College's responsibility to maintain all definitive documents. The format of the documents is prescribed by the University, and the College puts the information into the templates. The documents are monitored by the Head of Higher Education at the College and by the University to check the accuracy of information. The arrangements at the College, in conjunction with the University, enable Expectation A2.2 to be met in theory.

1.12 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined programme review documents, which contain programme handbooks and course definition documents. The team also reviewed the outline of responsibilities of the College and the University, regarding the design and maintenance of the definitive documents, found in the Memorandum of Agreement and Quality Assurance Handbook which is designed by the University. The review team also met academic staff and students to obtain their views on the documents.

1.13 The College maintains definitive documents for its franchised and quality assured programmes. The information available outlines the programme's aims, unit structures, overall learning outcomes, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, and is located within course handbooks or course definition documents.

1.14 The College's definitive documentation contains programme handbooks and programme definition documents. All documents outline the level of qualification that is provided in relation to the FHEQ, unit structures, the nature of the delivery of the programme, the student appeals and complaints process and student feedback opportunities. However, there is some variability between documents in relation to the inclusion of information relating to relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, assessment strategies and the College's higher education strategy.

1.15 Students are satisfied with the programme handbooks and programme definition documents. They have many opportunities to obtain the documents through dissemination from academic staff and via the VLE.

1.16 The review team concludes that the College has appropriate definitive programme documentation and that staff members are clear about their responsibilities for the maintenance of this. Therefore, Expectation A2.2 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**

1.17 The overall responsibility for the strategic oversight of programme design and approval of the College's higher education provision rests with the University. The College uses the University's Quality Assurance Handbook to assist with the design, approval, monitoring and review of the higher education programmes. Programme design is informed by the use of appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ and College staff are required to work with the University link tutors to ensure that the requirements are met. The College's use of the University's and its own processes allow Expectation A3.1 to be met in theory.

1.18 In testing this Expectation, the team scrutinised the evidence provided for the design and approval of programmes and the maintenance of academic standards. The team also held meetings with College staff, University representatives and students.

1.19 A clear process is in place to ensure the rigorous approval of new programmes. This involves a number of College-based procedures managed by various College staff many of whom are members of the Senior Leadership Team. The Head of Higher Education is responsible for clarifying the need for additional programmes through the Bexley College business planning process. This process is coordinated by the Principal and includes information on the demand for new provision, the adequacy and need for current and future resources and the ability of the College to meet academic standards. The result of this scrutiny is to agree or disagree to progress an application to the University's Academic Planning Committee (APC) for the introduction of a new programme.

1.20 Externality is achieved through the input from employers and work-based personnel, and feedback from external examiners where the proposed provision is similar to programmes that exist at the College. External examiners demonstrably facilitate external guidance and ensure that the requirements for the use of Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ are met, and that the provision offered by the College is comparable to that delivered elsewhere. Students were involved in the design and approval of new programmes such as the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care.

1.21 The review team concludes that the College makes effective use of its own and the University's programme approval processes to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to the approval of taught programmes. This approach also ensures that academic standards are set at a level which meet the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with the University's academic frameworks and regulations. Therefore, Expectation A3.1 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**

1.22 The University is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the learning outcomes have been achieved through appropriate assessment at module and subsequently at programme level. The College is required to follow the University guidance in the Quality Assurance Handbook to enable it to assure the quality of its provision fully and to set the aims, outcomes and expected standards correctly. Additionally, the College uses the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and Assessment and Feedback Policy to ensure that the expectations of the University of Greenwich Academic Regulations for Taught Awards are adhered to. The College's use of the University's and its own quality assurance processes therefore allow Expectation A3.2 to be met in theory.

1.23 In testing this Expectation, the review team scrutinised the self-evaluation document, the student submission and documentation provided as supporting sources of evidence for the appropriate award of credit. The team also held meetings with College staff, representatives from the University and students.

1.24 The College's quality assurance procedure operates in accordance with the University's requirements. External examiners play a fundamental role in ensuring that the assessment of module level learning outcomes and programme aims is appropriate in terms of subject specificity and at the correct academic level. External examiners formally report on the alignment of student assessed work with the FHEQ at the Subject Assessment Panels and Progression Award Boards.

1.25 Grading criteria are issued alongside assignment briefs and in module guidance documents and programme level handbooks. There is a clear increase in the level at which assessments are set for consecutive academic years and students report a progression of assessment difficulty as they proceed through the programme of study.

1.26 The College's quality assurance processes, in addition to those of the University, are used effectively to ensure compliance with the University's regulatory framework. The College sets assessments at appropriate levels, as defined in the FHEQ, and guided by the University, link tutors and confirmed by external examiners. A rigorous assessment moderation process ensures that assessments are set and marked at the correct level. Student grades are confirmed at annual Subject Assessment Panels and Progression Award Boards chaired by the University.

1.27 The review team concludes that the College has effective processes in place to ensure that assessments are set at the correct academic level in line with the FHEQ. Therefore, Expectation A3.2 is met 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**

1.28 The College is required to follow the guidance provided in the University Quality Assurance Handbook which outlines its quality assurance processes. Post approval and once recruiting, higher education programmes are required to undergo regular and systematic monitoring and review by both the University and the College, making use of information and expertise provided by external examiners, industry professionals and employers. The College is also required to adhere to the guidance provided in the handbook regarding periodic review which occurs once every five years. The College's use of the University's and its own quality assurance processes and structures allow Expectation A3.3 to be met in theory.

1.29 In testing this Expectation, the review team scrutinised documentation relating to the monitoring and review of programmes and the maintenance of academic standards. The team also held meetings with College staff, University representatives and students.

1.30 There is a thorough, higher education specific process for programme monitoring and review at the College which includes termly quality reviews, six-weekly performance reviews and fortnightly meetings between the Head of Higher Education and the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) to ensure that the appropriate academic standards are being maintained. This cycle of review meetings facilitates effective discussion and communication of actions within the College, with the Head of Higher Education also providing information for higher education teaching staff during staff meetings. Further detail on the operation of these processes is provided under Expectation B8.

1.31 The programme monitoring reports produced by the College are comprehensive and enable the identification of achievable actions to allow required academic standards to be met. Programme monitoring reports are considered by programme committees. These are then considered by the relevant faculty level quality subcommittees. The College uses its own and the University's quality assurance processes and structures (committees) effectively to ensure comprehensive monitoring and review of the academic standards of the higher education programmes at the College. Extensive use is made of external expertise provided by external examiners, industry professionals, employers and cognate subject staff from the University.

1.32 The review team concludes that the College operates an effective quality assurance process including the use of College and University-based committees to ensure that the required academic standards are met and maintained. Therefore, Expectation A3.3 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**

1.33 Arrangements for the external oversight of academic standards set, delivered and achieved at the College are put in place by the University. The University is required to ensure the use of externality at the validation stage, in the assessment of learning outcomes and at periodic review. The College is responsible for maintaining the academic standards of the provision it delivers to the standards set by the University through the application of the academic frameworks and regulations. It relies mostly on the expertise of the external examiners appointed by the University to provide externality. Validation and revalidation panels include external academic expertise and employer involvement in the validation process. The College values and uses external expertise in its quality assurance arrangements. The procedures at the College in association with the University enable the Expectation A3.4 to be met in theory.

1.34 In testing this Expectation, the review team evaluated the College's use of external expertise in the assurance and scrutiny of academic standards, through an evaluation of programme design and approval documents, external examiner reports and the College's response to these reports. The team also discussed externality with the College through meetings with College staff, University representatives and students.

1.35 The College values the input from external examiners who provide external guidance and facilitate the sharing of good practice. The College receives the external examiner reports and actively responds to the University regarding actions to be taken. Actions are reported formally through the programme monitoring reports to the relevant University Faculty. The external examiners attend the subject assessment panels, and progression and award boards and assist and advise the College on the quality of student attainment. Staff meet external examiners whose expertise is used to approve assessment approaches and confirm academic standards for programmes.

1.36 Although no programmes attract external accreditation, professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) are used to inform the curriculum content. The College relies on industry personnel and employers to confirm that the appropriate curriculum is delivered and that students are employable once they have completed their higher education programme.

1.37 The review team concludes that the College makes effective use of a variety of external opinion in the assurance of standards. Therefore, Expectation A3.4 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

1.38 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. The team did not identify any features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this area.

1.39 The College makes effective use of its own internal programme approval and monitoring processes in addition to those of its awarding body, the University of Greenwich. This ensures that academic standards are maintained in accordance with the relevant level of the FHEQ. These processes also include the appropriate use of external expertise.

1.40 The College has met all seven Expectations in this area and the associated level of risk is low. Therefore, the review team concludes that the College's maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body **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 has its own processes for the design, development and approval of programmes, although the University has the ultimate responsibility as the awarding body. Processes require programme design to be informed by the use of appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ and staff at the College work with the University link tutors to ensure that the requirements of the FHEQ are met. It is the College's responsibility to ensure that delivered programmes are adequately and appropriately resourced.

2.2 The College programme proposal process requires a viable business case to be made to support the development of new provision. Proposals are submitted to the University's Academic Planning Committee, and once permitted to progress to the development stage, a business plan is developed, market research conducted, projected numbers determined and resource needs identified. The University assembles an authorisation panel of internal and external experts to ascertain whether sufficient and appropriate resources exist at the College to allow the proposed programme to run successfully. Employers and representatives of professional bodies and current or past students are also included on the authorisation panel. Externality is also achieved through the use of employers and work-based learning providers, who contribute to the shaping of the curriculum and are involved in the design of assessments to ensure that they are fit for purpose and support the production of employable graduates.

2.3 The programme approval phase includes recognised academic and industry internal and external experts convened as an approval panel. The programme review meeting is the final stage of the approval process. A series of conditions and recommendations must be met by the College before the programme is allowed to run. The College's arrangements for the design, development and approval of programmes and the commitment to ensuring that programmes have a place within industry and can be appropriately resourced allow Expectation B1 to be met in theory.

2.4 In testing this Expectation, the team scrutinised evidence such as validation documents and meeting minutes. The team also held meetings with College staff, University representatives and students.

2.5 The College operates a rigorous process for programme design, development and approval through its collaborative and robust working relationship with the University. The Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care was recently revalidated and therefore subject to these processes. College staff responsible for programme development comply with the University's approval processes to ensure that programmes meet the required academic level and are sufficiently resourced. The College makes effective use of external academic and professional experts in this process to ensure that resources are appropriate.

2.6 Currently none of the programmes within the College higher education portfolio are accredited by a PSRB. However, close contact with the workplace ensures that the



curriculum remains contemporary and that students gain real-life experience and the opportunity to develop wide-ranging skills to enhance their employment prospects upon graduation.

2.7 The review team concludes that the College makes effective use of its own processes for programme design, development and approval in addition to engaging fully with the University's approval process. The College is also guided by requirements identified from within the work environment in ensuring that the programmes offered are appropriate. Therefore, Expectation B1 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**

2.8 The College takes collaborative responsibility for the recruitment, selection and admission of students, although the University monitors and retains control over the process and the mechanisms put in place. The College's academic staff, student services and marketing team work with the University to conduct the process collaboratively in order to widen opportunities for local students as outlined in the College's Higher Education Strategy document.

2.9 The College is required to follow the admissions policy in the University's Regulations for Taught Awards. There is an expectation that any student admitted onto a programme will be able to reach the standards required for the achievement of the award. The academic, vocational and professional qualifications accepted for entry to programmes should be published and made accessible to prospective students. The policy for assessing recognition of prior learning is also outlined within the document. The College's transparent and appropriate processes for the admissions process allows Expectation B2 to be met in theory.

2.10 In testing this Expectation, the review team analysed the admissions policy in the University's Academic Regulations For Taught Awards document, evidence of the College's admissions policy, such as information provided to students, and evidence of the process documented for monitoring between the two institutions. The team also held meetings with academic staff and professional support staff that are responsible for the admissions process in addition to meeting students.

2.11 The higher education admissions process is centralised and overseen by the Head of Higher Education and the Head of Student Services and dealt with by a dedicated Human Resources department who deal with higher education admissions at the College. The process is centralised so that all admissions are dealt with through a consistent process rather than by individual staff processing the admissions personally. Therefore, this approach provides more support for academic staff and admissions staff as they now have a greater understanding of the higher education admissions process. The centralised process ensures that information for prospective students is consistent across all programmes. In order to ensure that all staff are up to date with the admissions process, the Head of Higher Education and the Head of Student Services have attended Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) training. The attendance at these training opportunities allows staff to understand the specific procedures for the higher education admissions process.

2.12 The College marketing team is responsible for the production of information for prospective students. The team produces information regarding the nature of the programmes provided and the specific entry requirements for each programme that prospective students should hold in order to be accepted. The relationship between the College and the University is also outlined within this information. This information is then published in the College higher education prospectus, on the College website and on the University and UCAS websites. The marketing team is also responsible for publicly advertising College open days. Students are aware of the relationship and responsibilities

between the College and the University when applying for a programme and they outlined their satisfaction with the information provided.

2.13 The University allows College staff to provide appropriate information to students during clearing through its central hub for telephone enquiries. The University also allows the College to advertise information regarding the provision of programmes at University open days. The majority of applicants are interviewed by academic programme leaders at the College in order to assist prospective students in making informed decisions. Not all students are interviewed as they get bespoke interaction and information from academic staff regarding their application to a programme depending on their previous qualifications, recognition of prior learning and experience. All part-time prospective students are interviewed.

2.14 Regardless of whether students are on programmes franchised or validated by the University, there is a robust process within the College for the identification and provision of support to successfully recruited students who have declared disabilities. The College and University collaboratively have a clear process which identifies and provides relevant support to these students.

2.15 The review team concludes that the College has appropriate admissions policies and processes and these are implemented effectively. Therefore, Expectation B2 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**

2.16 The College has a clear strategic approach to the management of learning and teaching evidenced through a range of policies, practical observations and reviews. The College has developed a Higher Education Strategy whose priority is 'to inspire and support effective practice in learning and teaching'. The College's policies and procedures for learning and teaching complement those of the University with whom it works in partnership.

2.17 The higher education lesson observations inform staff appraisal and staff development priorities. Programmes are reviewed annually and the College provides reports to the University which analyse student feedback, achievement data and external examiner reports. The Head of Higher Education takes overall responsibility for the monitoring of learning and teaching. The College produces an Annual Institutional Report which is signed off by the Senior Leadership Team before being sent to the University. Programmes are also reviewed as part of revalidation cycles to ensure that content remains current and learning and assessment strategies support student achievement. There are comprehensive structures for students to comment on their learning experience and for the College to act on these comments. Within the Student Services department students have access to a wide range of support. All staff appointed to teach on higher education programmes are appropriately qualified and are approved by the University. These arrangements allow Expectation B3 to be met in theory.

2.18 In testing this Expectation, the review team held meetings with staff and students, and reviewed a wide range of programme documentation including learning and teaching strategies and policies, programme monitoring reports, validation and revalidation documents, programme handbooks, induction materials and minutes of a variety of programme and other committees.

2.19 The College works with the University in reviewing and enhancing learning opportunities. Therefore, the College's internal process for monitoring the quality of learning, teaching and assessment complements the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) developed by the University. Similarly the College's Learning and Teaching Observation process is supported by the Assessment and Feedback Policy of the University. A key feature of the approach to learning and teaching is the use of a set of Greenwich Graduate Attributes (GGA). The College articulates these through planning documentation as well as student assessments. A staff development day was held on 5 January 2015 where staff mapped the GGA to schemes of work to support the development of students' employability skills.

2.20 All teaching staff delivering higher education programmes must hold a recognised teaching qualification and are approved by the University. This enables both the College and the University to assure themselves that suitably qualified staff are delivering the qualifications. Students are involved in the interview process for staff and their views are part of the decision making.

2.21 The College has an effective lesson observation process designed specifically for higher education staff. The internal document used when observing learning, teaching and assessment references the Quality Code and a proportion of the observations are moderated by the Principal as an independent observer. A crucial part of the observation process is the involvement of student views of their learning, teaching and assessment experiences. All formal lesson observations are conducted by the Head of Higher Education and reported to the interim Head of Quality for moderation and follow-up on any actions arising. Learning and teaching 'walk-throughs' or 'drop-ins' are undertaken to maintain continuous support for teaching staff and to facilitate student feedback and involvement in their learning to supplement this process. Following an observation, any areas for development form part of a staff development plan for both the individual and the department. Development plans therefore focus on individual areas for improvement with the driver being student involvement in the action planning of learning and teaching.

2.22 Individual training needs are identified via the College's yearly appraisal process and staff have access to the University staff development programme. Training activities have included open lectures and a conference on teaching and learning and these events have informed and fostered a culture of pedagogic engagement. In addition, the Head of Higher Education oversees the training and development of higher education staff. The higher education staff have been trained on assessment for learning, lesson planning, preparation for the Higher Education Review process and embedding the GGA. The College dedicates Wednesday afternoons to course team meetings and the higher education course team meets to monitor student progress and attainment and undertake staff development.

2.23 There are comprehensive structures for students to comment on their learning experience and for the College to act on this feedback. These include the annual monitoring process and external examiners' reports. Students confirmed they have a comprehensive induction and one-to-one and group tutorials which support and drive improvement in their learning.

2.24 The Student Services department offers good support to students allowing them to effectively develop their skills and become independent learners. Students access a wide range of support and there is a dedicated person to deal with higher education-specific issues. Likewise, in the Learning Resource Centre, a named individual gives focused advice and guidance to higher education students, including support for assignments, the VLE and plagiarism-detection software. This facilitates meeting student needs at a local level and in a highly responsive way.

2.25 Open access sessions and one-to-one support are available to assist students with their learning skills. E-books and textbooks addressing study skills and creativity are available and are promoted on the VLE and in class to higher education students. The support available to students has been highlighted as good practice in Expectation B4, paragraph 2.33.

2.26 The review team concludes that the College has effective processes and procedures in place to manage the quality of learning and teaching and supports students effectively. Therefore, Expectation B3 is met and the 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**

2.27 The Vice Principal (Finance and Resources), together with the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the strategic allocation of resources to support and enable students to develop their potential. The allocation of resources is an ongoing process throughout the year. The College offers a range of specialist support to students, including welfare, counselling, assisting students applying for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and support for dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. Students have access to both group and individual tutorials and a comprehensive induction. The College facilitates student transitions to higher level study and employment through links with the University, alumni and employers. These arrangements allow Expectation B4 to be met in theory.

2.28 In testing this Expectation, the review team checked the effectiveness of arrangements for student development and achievement through an evaluation of programme handbooks, documents setting out additional support and guidance, and through meetings with staff, students, alumni and employers.

2.29 Resources to support students are continually being developed, monitored and reviewed. Students are encouraged to comment on resources, teaching and facilities through the Higher Education Forum, programme monitoring committees, and drop-ins with the Head of Higher Education. There are a number of examples of where the College has responded to student feedback and resource issues during the academic year. For example, Building Studies students confirmed the College's purchase of surveying equipment, which has enabled them to meet industry standards.

2.30 Students have access to both the University Charter and the College Student Charter and these are referred to during the induction process. The College Student Charter explains the services and support that students can expect and what the College expects of the student, which includes the process of involvement in decision making, the role and purpose of the Students' Union and course representatives. The College has made rigorous efforts to communicate the Charters and students confirmed they understood their rights and responsibilities.

2.31 Students value the tutorial support from their programme leaders as well as from the Student Services department. Students have access to two level 6 qualified staff dedicated to Information Advice and Guidance, a Qualified and Accredited Counsellor, two Welfare Advisers and a Student Adviser in the Student Services department. They receive a range of guidance including help with issues such as finances. The Student Services department has also provided students with effective additional support on referencing, after this was highlighted as an area for development in an external examiner's report.

2.32 Students confirmed that they access careers advice at the College. Curriculum Vitae writing and interview practice sessions are delivered by the Student Services Team especially for the second years, in addition to tutorials on writing personal statements for applying to degree programmes at the University. Foundation Degree Health and Social Care students were invited to a conference delivered by the University for student future career progression and enhancement of learning. Additional learning support is delivered by a dedicated team which provides one-to-one, in class and open access support to students identified either through the initial diagnostic test, referred by their tutor or self-referred.

They provide targeted support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and students who had accessed the support confirmed it was helpful.

2.33 Students are positive about the resources and support received from the learning resources centres and cite examples of staff responding helpfully to student requests for texts or access to online resources. Learning resources staff provide dedicated support to higher education students in a variety of ways, for example, with bespoke inductions which include a presentation on referencing and plagiarism, and follow-up sessions concentrating on the use of referencing, plagiarism and computer software packages. Staff also support the use of the VLE. There is effective liaison between the learning resources staff and network support within the College which facilitates student achievement. The review team therefore recognises the comprehensive and cohesive range of support that enables students to achieve their academic, personal and professional potential as **good practice**.

2.34 Transition into higher education and employment is supported in a variety of ways. Students and staff have the opportunity to participate in educational visits to places such as: Greenwich Peninsula, the Houses of Parliament and the Appsworld Exhibition at the Excel Centre. The Foundation Degree Health and Social Care second year students requested an 'enrichment activity day' to the University as preparation for progression to the third year and this was provided. The students who attended the progression day, which was staffed by the BA programme leader, found it provided them with very useful information and careers advice.

2.35 The College effectively uses alumni to promote aspiration and progression. The Higher Education Conference held in October 2014 supported student transition with talks from former students who had progressed onto further higher education qualifications. Similarly on the Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) Building Studies programme former high-achieving students were invited during the first semester to address the new intakes. A guest speaker, who is a former student, provided a talk to first year students on the requirements of the Foundation Degree Computing programme.

2.36 The review team concludes that the College effectively allocates resources and supports students to reach their potential. The College responds to student feedback and good practice was identified in facilitating student development and achievement. Therefore Expectation B4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**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**

2.37 The College has outlined its commitment to involve all students in the quality assurance of their programmes through its student voice diagram. The College has strategic processes which involve deliberate steps to engage students in the enhancement and assurance of their learning opportunities. The College has also designed various procedures that allow students to communicate to the College management team potential ways of improving the quality of their learning opportunities and experiences. The processes for student engagement at the College enable Expectation B5 to be met in theory.

2.38 In testing this Expectation, the review team analysed programme handbooks and a student feedback charter which outlines to students the various opportunities available to them to provide feedback or raise issues to senior levels at the institution. The team reviewed various College report documents which embed the accumulation and analysis of student feedback. The review team also scrutinised the student submission document and held meetings and telephone discussions with students during the review visit.

2.39 The College held an offsite higher education conference in October 2014 which focused on the importance of student engagement and attendance for students. An aim of the conference was to address some of the concerns relating to low attendance rates and student engagement. The College Principal, link tutors, a member of the University's Student Union and former students contributed to the event which demonstrated to the students the positive impact on student employability that regular attendance and engagement achieves. Students declared the event beneficial, highlighting that it raised their awareness regarding the importance of strong engagement with their studies. This was the first higher education conference held and while it is still quite early to determine the full impact of this the feedback to date is positive and it has the potential to become a regular event.

2.40 Student feedback is collected and fed into programme monitoring reports, annual institutional reports, programme committee meetings, student forums and higher education forums which allows student views to be accumulated in a formal manner and presented to senior staff. Students confirmed that they could communicate their opinions formally and informally and that they were aware of the mechanisms that enabled them to express their views. Examples of these methods include students meeting with student representatives, informal meetings with academic staff, tutorials and through the completion of questionnaires. Students are involved in providing feedback during teaching observations and during the revalidation of programmes. Through the collation of student feedback, programmes can be amended in design if an issue has been highlighted. For example, the recent revalidation of the Foundation Degree Health and Social Care programme outlined that the programme handbook is regularly updated and amended following feedback from students. This evidence signals that students are involved as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their learning opportunities. Students also provide feedback in micro teach observations during the interview process for prospective new academic staff.

2.41 The College ensures that student representatives are appointed within all programmes. This process allows the student voice to be communicated during various senior team meetings such as student forums, higher education forums and programme committee meetings.



2.42 There are specific training materials and opportunities that student representatives receive and benefit from. Students are aware of the role of the student representative and understand the importance of the role as a process to engage with the enhancement of their learning experience. Feedback from students that arises during student forums which has been acted upon by the College is signposted within 'You Said We Did' posters designed by the College. In addition to the student representatives at programme level, the College has its own Students' Union. However, it acknowledges that at times the position of higher education representative has been difficult to fill. Students are however, also encouraged to join the University Students' Union.

2.43 The review team concludes that the design and operation of the processes that allow students to contribute to the assurance and enhancement of their learning experience at the College is effective. Therefore, Expectation B5 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**

2.44 The College is required to follow the University's guidance for assessments to ensure that they are set at the appropriate level and clearly connected to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement(s). Furthermore, explicit links must exist between programme aims and the assessed learning outcomes within the programme specification. When setting assessments, College staff use the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy and the Assessment and Feedback Policy in addition to generic guidance in the University's Quality Assurance Handbook. The College states that learning and teaching and associated resources provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve their intended learning outcomes.

2.45 For the College's existing higher education provision, the responsibility for setting the work is shared with the University, while marking-related activities lies with the College. The first marking of work, second-marking and/or moderation of work and the provision of feedback is the responsibility of the College and actions are taken to achieve consistency in practice across the provision according to the University's requirements.

2.46 The College is required to use the University's Academic Regulations for Taught Awards which detail the process of recognition of prior learning (RPL). Although the occasional applicant to the College has enquired about the possibility of accrediting units achieved at another higher education institution or training organisation, this has not progressed to the stage for the RPL process to be used. The College's equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including those for the RPL, allow Expectation B6 to be met in theory.

2.47 In testing the Expectation, the team scrutinised documentation provided as supporting sources of evidence in relation to the operation of assessment-related processes. The team also held meetings with a range of staff members and students.

2.48 The College and its staff make thorough use of the University's Assessment and Feedback Policy. This involves a focus on the provision of clear and accessible information regarding assessment, careful design to promote effective learning and the provision of assessment criteria for specific component tasks. It also includes the relationship to learning outcomes and the allocation of marks and the use of fair, valid and reliable assessment procedures and the need for external scrutiny.

2.49 Generic assessment grading criteria are made available in handbooks, module guides, assignment briefs and on the VLE. Students are very aware of how they will be graded as they are provided with an outline marking scheme with each individual piece of course work. College staff also explain what is expected of students at the beginning of each semester. As a result, students are very clear about the expectations placed upon them when undertaking specific assessments, in particular how they will be graded.

2.50 Students are very happy with the level of feedback provided on their assignments and consider that the feedback received is constructive and to support future improvement.

Some students felt there was a degree of variability between the feedback provided by different lecturers and would welcome further opportunities for one-to-one discussion. However, overall, students were positive about the support and feedback provided on their programmes. Although students were not aware of a published expected return of work timeframe they agreed that most work is returned within four working weeks, subject to ratification at the end of year panels and boards following internal moderation and external examiner scrutiny. Students also understand the implications of plagiarism and the significance of any action taken against them if they are caught plagiarising another student's work.

2.51 Marked assessments are subject to internal moderation and, where the programme runs as part of a wider partnership, moderation is also conducted across the Colleges, before scrutiny by an independent external examiner appointed by the University's Academic Quality Unit. External examiners' reports generally highlight the rigour of the conduct of the assessment process across the College higher education provision and the responsiveness of staff to address any issues that do arise.

2.52 The College uses GGA, developed by the University, which encompass scholarship and intellectual, professional and creative skills. The College recognises that these are effectively transferable and important employability skills and has undertaken substantial work to train staff and to integrate them into programme curriculum and assessment.

2.53 The College uses both its own and the University's assessment-related quality assurance procedures to ensure that its assessment processes are equitable, valid and reliable. This currently allows every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for their modules or programme of study. While the College has a process by which applications for the recognition of prior learning can be made, it acknowledges that the procedure is as yet untested.

2.54 The review team concludes that the College operates a rigorous assessment process to ensure appropriate assessment of students on its programmes at all levels. Therefore, Expectation B6 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**

2.55 External examiners are appointed by the University, and the College is required to adhere to the University's external examining process[SED 174]. The role of the external examiner is outlined in the University's Academic Regulations for Taught Awards.

2.56 External examiners approve the format and content of formal examinations and review assignment briefs and samples of student work, to endorse the marks and decisions made by the subject assessment panels and the progression and awards boards held by the University. External examiner reports are considered at College programme committee meetings at which students are represented, and inform the production of the programme monitoring reports. Programme teams and the Head of Higher Education are required to respond to external examiners' reports by using the University's online system where the responses from the College are scrutinised by the University Faculty academic managers before being uploaded by the Academic Quality Unit. Based on these arrangements the College meets Expectation B7 in theory.

2.57 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined documentation, policies and procedures and held meetings with staff and students to establish the scrupulous use of external examiners on the part of the College.

2.58 External examiner reports considered by the review team confirm that standards are of the level expected, and that assessment practices measure student achievement rigorously. Staff members confirmed that external examiners have access to student assessments and visit the programme teams annually in accordance with University requirements. Students confirmed their attendance at programme committee meetings where external examiner reports are considered, and which inform the production of the programme monitoring reports.

2.59 The College has a clear and robust process for responding to external examiner actions. The Head of Higher Education and programme teams respond to the external examiners' reports via the online system and the University Faculty Academic Managers then scrutinise the College's response before it is uploaded by the Academic Quality Unit. Feedback is evaluated and used to partially inform the programme level action plans that are produced annually. The review team saw examples on all programmes where the College responds speedily and effectively to external examiner actions and this was confirmed in meetings with staff and students.

2.60 The College ensures that external examiners' reports are made available to students and students confirmed that they knew where to access them. Copies are available in the Learning Resource Centres, at programme committee meetings and student representatives receive a hard copy to disseminate to peers. In addition, this academic year, copies of the reports are available on the VLE. Programme handbooks contain a link to the process of external examining, explaining the duties of external examiners.

2.61 The oversight of quality enhancement based on external examiner reports is maintained by the Head of Higher Education and reported to the Senior Leadership Team. External examiner reports are used to inform improvements at programme and College level. Therefore, the review team concludes that the College makes scrupulous use of external examiners, Expectation B7 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**

2.62 The College is required to meet the University's requirements for the monitoring and review of programmes. The monitoring process is outlined in the University's Quality Assurance handbook, along with information in the University Assessment and Feedback Policy and the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards.

2.63 The College is also required to produce annual programme monitoring review reports which include a critical overview of the programme and the integration of the GGA, feedback from external examiners, data analysis and student feedback. The reports also include an assessment of curriculum development and associated resources, learning, teaching and employability initiatives and any PSRB links. Programmes at the College are also required to undergo a five-yearly periodic review. The processes for the monitoring and review of programmes at the College in association with the University therefore enable Expectation B8 to be met in theory.

2.64 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined relevant documentation such as programme monitoring reports and action plans. The team also held meetings with staff from the College, University representatives and students.

2.65 The College operates an extensive internal process to ensure the complete monitoring and review of its higher education programmes. The monitoring and review of existing programmes relies on a structure comprising three internal College meetings. Quality reviews are conducted once per term in which all of the quality assurance documentation required by the University is scrutinised. This set of documentation comprises programme monitoring reports, the Annual Institutional Report and a record of actions taken to address issues raised by external examiners. The quality reviews are attended by the College interim Head of Quality and the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) and consider the outcomes of teaching and learning observations. Further scrutiny of programme level provision occurs at departmental level and leads to the construction of staff departmental development plans. The Head of Higher Education is also involved in this process. Performance review meetings are held every six weeks and focus on the maintenance of academic standards across the entire higher education provision (as discussed in Expectation A3.3) and ensure that students are provided with the resources needed in order to meet their learning objectives at the appropriate level. The performance review meetings also examine retention, achievement and success (and progression) data and are attended by the Principal and the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality).

2.66 Curriculum content is reviewed through the annual monitoring process to ensure continued vocational links. For example, the need for content specifically related to dementia care has resulted in a new unit being approved at the successful revalidation of the Foundation Degree Health and Social Care programme. The mechanisms for student involvement at the College are used effectively to provide feedback that is included in the programme monitoring reports and addressed through action plans, along with feedback from external examiners.

2.67 The annual institutional reports, produced by the Head of Higher Education and Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality), include a critical appraisal of the existing and

planned higher education provision at the College. Recent developments are discussed including progress with computing and information technology-related resources. The 2013-14 Annual Institutional Report identified an issue with student attendance which the College is addressing through initiatives such as the higher education student conference.

2.68 The review team concludes that the College uses its quality assurance processes and structures effectively to ensure comprehensive monitoring and review of the learning opportunities associated with its higher education programmes and this includes the comprehensive use of external expertise and feedback from students. Therefore, Expectation B8 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**

2.69 The College has a complaints policy that is provided to students on both campuses. This policy details three stages with students initially required to raise any issues with a member of the teaching team, if appropriate. The complaint can then be logged at this stage, if required. The second stage directs students to make any complaints about teaching or the provision to an appropriate contact such as a Head of Faculty. The Student Services department can also support students with this process. Finally, if the complaint is not resolved after the options outlined above, stage three requires students to write to the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) for the matter to be investigated. There is also an option for students to appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

2.70 Students wishing to make an academic appeal are required to follow the University's Academic Appeals Process which is provided in the Academic Regulations for. This process is available for use after decisions made at the progression and award boards if, for example, there are extenuating circumstances. The College's processes for handling complaints and appeals, along with those of the University, enable Expectation B9 to be met in theory.

2.71 In testing this Expectation, the review team scrutinised College and University documentation that outlines the policies and procedures that are used for handling complaints and academic appeals at the College. The team also analysed evidence of how the complaints procedure functioned in practice and held meetings with staff members and students.

2.72 Students are provided with information regarding the nature of the appeals and complaints procedures and where to access the relevant forms through programme handbooks and during inductions. Students met by the review team confirmed that they are aware of the procedures and where to access the relevant information and forms.

2.73 The processes for complaints and appeals are clearly distinguished and outlined in relevant documentation. Students understand the nature of the two sets of policies. The processes are effectively designed to prevent students from risking any disadvantage during their studies.

2.74 The College implements the complaints procedure in a full and timely manner and in accordance with the documented policies. The effective use of the procedures was demonstrated by the handling of three complaints made during the 2013-14 academic year. The functioning of the complaints procedure is documented for quality assurance purposes which allows the regular monitoring of the process.

2.75 The review team concludes that the College, in association with the University, has a clear, transparent and accessible academic appeals and student complaints policy and set of procedures. The procedures are effective in design, accessible and implemented in a timely manner in practice. Therefore, Expectation B9 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**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**

2.76 The College delivers one programme requiring formal work experience: the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care which requires students to undertake work-based learning delivered by other organisations either in early years or care settings. Students are informed of the requirements for this at interview, during induction and through programme handbooks.

2.77 The College has clear procedures for supporting and managing provision with others, including the provision of work placements. The majority of student work experience placements are arranged by the Programme Leader who has established links with employers. However, if students are already employed in a suitable work placement or request to arrange their own, then this can be negotiated with the Programme Leader. The College maintains oversight of placement opportunities through having a formal contract of learning, visits, links with alumni and monitoring students' development plans specific to their placement. These arrangements indicate that Expectation B10 is met in theory.

2.78 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined the College's arrangements for supporting and managing provision with others through scrutiny of programme handbooks, guides and work placement documentation. The team also held meetings with employers, alumni, staff and students.

2.79 All students undertaking work-based projects participate in a series of introductory sessions covering independent learning and using learning contracts. Participants are essentially self-managed during their placement experience and supported by tutors. Support from employers and tutors is negotiated as part of the learning contract and employers receive a mentor's handbook. Throughout the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care programme, students compile and maintain a portfolio of learning. The portfolio is a record of learning and outcomes of assessment which demonstrate progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. The purpose of the portfolio is to provide cumulative evidence about a student's achievement and progress, demonstrating the link between theory and practice. Students confirmed the value of applying theory learnt in the classroom to practice.

2.80 The subject tutor offers both group and personal tutoring alongside formal teaching sessions, which facilitate the monitoring of the quality of the placement experience. Both early years and care students attend group tutorials to maximise peer support and sharing of experiences. Personal tutoring is given by the subject lecturer and timetabled in the teaching session handbook. Students have the opportunity to discuss the course content and assignment requirements, placement experience and to receive constructive feedback via verbal and written communication which will support the student's needs.

2.81 At the commencement of the placement the programme leader visits the workplace to explain the role of the mentor and to sign the Contract of Learning. In addition to this, discussion takes place between the Programme Leader, the mentor and the student to determine the focus of the negotiated project. Employers confirmed they were well prepared



for the role, with information in mentors' handbooks and programme aims and outcomes provided to them during meetings and visits.

2.82 The review team found systems are in place to monitor the quality of the student work experience which in the first instance may arise through tutorials with the course tutor. If there are any concerns about the quality of the placement or student professionalism, these are raised in the first instance with the programme tutor. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that at least one formal visit is undertaken to the placement to continue to gauge the suitability and quality of the relationship between all parties. Feedback from students on placements was generally positive and they felt the experience helped them develop both technical skills and soft skills. Students also valued the opportunity to gain experience which would make them look attractive to prospective employers and indicated how useful it was to tie the theory they had learnt in the classroom to the real world in a practical setting.

2.83 The review team concludes that work-based learning constitutes an effective and valued part of the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care and the College has clear procedures to support students and assure the quality of the placement. Therefore, Expectation B10 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**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**

2.84 The College does not deliver research degrees.

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.85 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. The team identified one feature of good practice in this area and no recommendations or affirmations.

2.86 The College effectively uses its own processes for elements such as programme approval and monitoring in addition to those of the University. There are clear policies and procedures in place for admissions, complaints and appeals and these are implemented in practice. The College has recognised some issues with attendance and is addressing these through newly developed initiatives such as the higher education conference. Given that the first conference was held in October 2014 there has been more limited opportunity to see the full impact of initiatives like this and for it to be recognised as good practice during the current review. The College is committed to learning and teaching and has a distinct focus on its higher education provision. Students are supported by staff members across the College and this was recognised by the team in Expectation B4 with the good practice relating to the comprehensive and cohesive range of support that enables students to achieve their academic, personal and professional potential. There are suitable resources provided for the higher education programmes and a number of mechanisms for student engagement, although at times, some positions such as the higher education representative position in the College's Students Union have been difficult to fill. Although student engagement is not consistently widespread, the College does ensure that students can effectively contribute to the assurance and enhancement of their learning experience.

2.87 All 10 of the relevant Expectations were met in this area with low risk. Overall, the College has sound and effective processes in place and the review team recognised one feature of good practice in concluding that, overall, the quality of student learning opportunities **meets** 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 publishes information about its mission, values and aims along with details of the programmes that are provided and information relating to the resources available to students at the College. The partnership between the College and the University is documented in a Memorandum of Agreement and Service Level Agreement.

3.2 The College publishes information about the provision of programmes in its prospectus, on the College website and through advertisements and open days/evenings. All enrolled students are provided with a programme handbook which gives details of the course and assessment information. Enrolled students can also access information on the VLE. The College is responsible for the design and monitoring of published information as outlined within the Memorandum of Agreement. All published information is required to be monitored by the Head of Higher Education and signed off by the Principal.

3.3 The College publishes a range of information and there are processes for monitoring this. These processes enable Expectation C to be met in theory.

3.4 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined the effectiveness of the process by analysing published information such as the College prospectus, programme handbooks and by checking the Higher Education Strategy and the Memorandum of Agreement. The team also held meetings with students and a range of staff members.

3.5 The College's mission, values and aims are published on the College website, VLE and within its Higher Education Strategy document. The College values were agreed by governors, the Senior Leadership Team, academic staff and students and the aim of widening student participation in the local area is highly promoted. There is an emphasis on professionalism between staff and students as described in the College's student charter.

3.6 The College prospectus outlines the programmes on offer to prospective students. It also includes the specific academic and non-academic requirements for prospective students to be enrolled onto a programme and defines the appropriate application process for prospective students along with the various means of support that is available.

3.7 The College holds open days/evenings in order to provide prospective students with information about the academic provision, environment, and guidance regarding the application process. Students commented that the open days, where the College prospectus was made available for prospective students, were useful and that they emphasised the relationship between the College and the University.

3.8 All newly recruited students are provided with programme handbooks. The handbooks contain information such as programme unit structures, credit framework descriptions and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The handbooks also contain information related to assessment strategies, external examiners, descriptions of the student complaints' process and an outline of the student support available. Programme handbooks are given to newly recruited students in both printed and digital versions, which can also be

accessed on the student VLE. Students have declared the handbooks very useful and that they cover all areas related to their studies at the College.

3.9 The College has a dedicated adviser for higher education provision who provides advice and guidance through all stages of a student's lifecycle at the College. This advice can range from issues related to the application process to students' concerns with their graduation.

3.10 The marketing team has regular contact with the Head of Higher Education, the Principal and with students through forums in order to monitor and discuss the quality of the College's published information. All information is monitored by the Head of Higher Education, the Higher Education Secretary and programme leaders which ensures that it is monitored by a collaborative process and that there is appropriate oversight. The Higher Education Secretary also checks with the University to make sure that information related to the University is accurate. The Head of Higher Education and the Principal sign off all information before it is published at the College.

3.11 The review team concludes that the College publishes information that is fit for its intended audience and students confirm that they have found published information to be accurate and accessible. The College operates a process of strict monitoring of information produced in order to ensure that it is accurate and trustworthy. Therefore, Expectation C is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

3.12 In reaching its judgement relating to the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this area.

3.13 The College has clear processes in place to enable the production of information that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The College provides prospective students with appropriate information via its website, prospectus and during events such as open days. The College monitors the information produced and works within the requirements of the University.

3.14 The Expectation is met with a low level of risk and the review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the College **meets** 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 references its Higher Education Strategy as the main driver for the enhancement of students' learning opportunities with the aims and objectives linking directly to the College's vision and Strategic Plan. The Higher Education Strategy identifies aims relating to the provision of higher education in collaboration with stakeholders to meet regional needs, to equip students with appropriate skills and to widen participation. The College aims to 'maintain and enhance the range and quality of higher education.

4.2 The College regards learning and teaching as its core, priority business and involves students in the development of learning opportunities. The College's processes for working with its staff, students and other stakeholders to articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, is designed to be in line with Expectation B3 of the Quality Code. The approach to enhancement enables this Expectation to be met in theory.

4.3 In testing this Expectation, the review team analysed a range of documentation including the Higher Education Strategy and the College Strategic Plan. The team also looked at minutes of meetings and met staff members, employers, alumni and students.

4.4 The College has introduced a number of initiatives and actions to support and develop student learning opportunities. The College reports to the University in the annual institutional report any improvements and enhancements that have been implemented. Since the 2011-12 academic year the College has focused on securing more electronic and online resources to support higher education programmes and expanded the dedicated Higher Education Learning Zone in the Learning Resource Centres. The College has reprioritised the implementation of simplified access to previously restricted access websites to support the availability of contemporary curricula, implemented auto-saving functionality for electronic work produced by students, increased the size of individual student user space on the College server, increased library borrowing capacity and loan duration to improve learning opportunities and consequently students' ability to complete assessments.

4.5 College students benefit from a new building. As part of the new build the strategic decision was taken to install multiple wireless access points allowing students to stay connected using their own devices. Students also benefit from support provided by the Network Support Team to configure personal mobile devices and assistance with technical problems. This proactive approach to supporting the installation of the 'Bring Your Own Devices' initiative coupled with improved remote access capability and the installation of online storage quota ensures that students have continuous access to resources in support of their academic study.

4.6 The College has used the development of the new building to enhance the quality of learning opportunities for students. For example, subject-specific students were included and employed to help with the building design, construction, and the computer installation and networking following a robust application and interview process managed by the College's Human Resources team.

4.7 Other College initiatives include the Higher Education Conference which was implemented to address a theme of student enhancement and progression. Some mixed

feedback was received from this event although it was mostly positive and the opportunity to network with University staff was welcomed by the students.

4.8 The College makes appropriate use of external information such as external examiners' reports in reviewing and developing its provision. There is a specific slot to enable higher education staff members to share good practice and a clear committee structure. There is a strategy for the higher education provision at the College and this includes references to enhancement. There are examples of initiatives that have been implemented at the College in support of the aims to enhance provision. However, there is more limited evidence of the integration of these initiatives and the clear communication of these throughout the College in terms of enhancement. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the College consolidate and articulate the existing strategic approach to the enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities at higher education level.

4.9 The review team concludes that, although the College's approach to enhancement could be consolidated and articulated more clearly, there is evidence of deliberate steps being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**



## The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.10 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no features of good practice or affirmations in this area, but the review team identified one recommendation.

4.11 The College has documented its commitment to enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities. There is evidence of initiatives that have been implemented as a result of a strategic approach and the College makes use of feedback from relevant stakeholders. However, the review team recommends that the College consolidates and articulates the existing strategic approach to the enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities at higher education level.

4.12 Staff members share good practice across the higher education provision and there are clear systems for the monitoring of programmes. The College has a clearly defined committee structure to enable oversight of the higher education provision and quality assurance systems are used effectively to identify, action and monitor improvements.

4.13 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low. Therefore, the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

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

### Findings

- 5.1 The College offers various opportunities for students to be involved in the quality assurance and enhancement of their learning experience as outlined in its student voice diagram. Programme handbooks also include information on the various opportunities for students to feed back on their educational experience.
- 5.2 Students can comment on issues informally to staff through impromptu tutorials on a weekly basis. If issues do arise from an informal feedback opportunity, they can be fed into regular staff team meetings which allow issues to be addressed immediately.
- 5.3 Students are included in the College's validation panel that approves new or revalidated programmes. They are also invited to take part in interviews in the form of micro teach sessions for the selection of prospective new academic staff and to give feedback during teaching observations. Students complete questionnaires and surveys in order to provide feedback on their educational experiences. They are also encouraged to join the Students' Union at the College and at the University.
- 5.4 The College has a dedicated higher education administrator who deals with day to day issues. The administrator deals with these issues through a helpdesk process allowing students to notify the College of immediate problems or questions that may arise.
- 5.5 All programmes require the selection of a student representative. These student representatives communicate the student voice formally through student forums, higher education forums and programme committee meetings which are attended by University link tutors and senior staff. The College provides representatives with the relevant training material in order to prepare them for the position so that they can carry out their roles appropriately. Student representatives are also expected to communicate to other students amendments made by the College that affect their studies, particularly if it is an issue raised previously by the students. The 'You Said, We Did' posters produced by the College also vocalise the changes made.
- 5.6 The College held a Higher Education Conference for all higher education students. The theme for the conference was student engagement and the importance of regular student attendance. The College Principal was involved in this event and other speakers included representatives from the University, Students' Union, link tutors and former College students. Students were positive about the opportunity to talk to a number of staff from the College, University and members of the Students' Union during the conference.
- 5.7 Overall, the College has a number of mechanisms to involve students in quality assurance and enhancement. A key focus is reaching students who attend College on a very part-time basis and have numerous work and personal commitments. The College is continuing to develop student involvement mechanisms and introduce new initiatives, such as the Higher Education Conference, to maintain the regular communication between senior leadership members at the College and student representatives. It is also encouraging the open dialogue between students and academic members of staff through impromptu tutorials and discussions owing to the accessibility of staff and the small nature of the higher education environment.

## 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](http://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](http://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.

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