



**QAA**

# **Outcomes from institutional audit**

## **Arrangements for international students**



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### Summary

Consideration of the first 70 institutional audit reports suggests that, overall, institutions have established suitable arrangements to recruit, induct and support international students. It is noteworthy that the published reports identify twice as many features of good practice in this area as recommendations.

Students are central to the principal focuses of institutional audit. There is no requirement to report separately on arrangements made for the support of international, overseas or non-UK students. However, descriptions and analyses of arrangements for their support can be found in nearly 80 per cent of the 70 reports published by November 2004, in many cases associated with features of good practice. Few reports which address arrangements for international students offer recommendations in this area (less than 10 per cent) and almost half of the reports describe institutions' arrangements in positive or very positive terms.

Overall, the reports show that institutions are adopting strategic approaches to the support of international students and an awareness of the challenges involved in recruiting large numbers of students whose first language is not English. Many reports describe the support offered to international students, including how it is organised overall. Associated with this, many reports describe arrangements for providing information to international students, for their orientation and induction, English language support, academic and personal support, and representation and feedback arrangements.

When recruiting international students, institutions have identified for themselves the desirability of establishing a common policy framework to improve coordination of international student support between central departments and schools. In some cases, institutions have also recognised a need to provide continuing support for international students. They have also described the pressures on careers services from the special demands of overseas students, particularly from those who return home after graduation. Several institutions have put in place cultural awareness training for academic and support staff with responsibility for international students.

Overall, it is clear that institutions with substantial numbers of international students appreciate the importance of meeting their expectations and providing specialist academic and personal support. There is evidence that, in anticipation of a growth in the numbers of students from overseas, institutions have been keeping support services under review and dedicating extra resources with a view to enhancing the experience of international students.

### Preface

An objective of institutional audit is 'to contribute, in conjunction with other mechanisms, to the promotion and enhancement of high quality in teaching and learning'. One of the ways in which this can be accomplished is through identifying features of good practice across the reports and areas where reports have commonly offered recommendations for improvement.

In due course, QAA intends to produce an extended reflection on institutional audit in the *Learning from audit* series, but since the final institutional audit reports in the present audit cycle will not be published until spring 2006, *Learning from institutional audit* is unlikely to be published before late 2006. To give institutions and other stakeholders more timely information, QAA has therefore decided to produce a series of short working papers, describing features of good practice and summarising recommendations from the audit reports, to be published under the generic title *Outcomes from institutional audit* (hereafter, *Outcomes...*).

A feature of good practice in institutional audit is considered to be a process, a practice, or a way of handling matters which, in the context of the particular institution, is improving, or leading to the improvement of, the management of quality and/or academic standards, and learning and teaching. *Outcomes...* papers are intended to provide readers with pointers to where features of good practice relating to particular topics can be located in the published audit reports. Each *Outcomes...* paper therefore identifies the features of good practice in individual reports associated with the particular topic and their location in the Main report. Although all features of good practice are listed, in the interests of brevity not all are discussed in this paper. In the initial listing in paragraph 9, the first reference is to the numbered or bulleted lists of features of good practice at the end of each institutional audit report, the second to the relevant paragraphs in Section 2 of the Main report. Throughout the body of this paper, references to features of good practice in the institutional audit reports give the institution's name and the paragraph number from Section 2 of the Main report.

It should be emphasised that the features of good practice mentioned in this paper should be considered in their proper institutional context and that each is perhaps best viewed as a stimulus to reflection and further development rather than as a model for emulation. A note on the topics identified for the first series of *Outcomes...* papers, to be published throughout 2005-06, can be found at Appendix 3 (page 15).

This first series of *Outcomes...* papers is based on the 70 institutional audit reports published by the end of November 2004. The second series will draw on institutional audit reports published following the 2004-05 audits. It is likely that there will be some overlap in topics between the first and second series. Papers in each series are, perhaps, best seen as 'work in progress'. Although QAA retains copyright in the contents of the *Outcomes...* papers they can be freely downloaded from QAA's website and cited, with acknowledgement.

## **Arrangements for international students: introduction and general overview**

1 This paper is based on a review of the outcomes of the first 70 institutional audits published by 5 November 2004 (see Appendix 1, page 12). A note on the methodology used to produce this and other papers in the *Outcomes...* series can be found in Appendix 4 (page 16).

2 Although students are central to the principal focuses of institutional audit and to the audit process itself, there is no requirement on audit teams to report separately on arrangements made for the support of international, overseas or non-UK students. This may explain why there are few specific references to international students in the features of good practice identified in the audit reports or in the recommendations for action made by audit teams.

3 The fact that references to international students occur, however, in nearly 80 per cent of the 70 reports is an indication of the growing numbers of students from overseas recruited by institutions and the importance attached to the support of a 'sizeable body of clients who have specific expectations with regard to the provision of services'.

4 The primary source of evidence for an institutional audit is the self-evaluation document (SED) prepared by the institution hosting the audit to support the process. In two or three cases, the relevant reports note that the SED had indicated that the institution was recruiting (or intended to recruit), substantial numbers of international students. These reports noted that the audit had reviewed arrangements for the recruitment, induction and support of international students and that the audit team had asked to meet groups of students to explore their experiences.

5 In all institutional audits, however, there are opportunities for audit teams meet international students during briefing visits and discipline audit trails. For this reason, there is a considerable amount of material in reports on the support offered to international students that has, in some cases, contributed to features of good practice or to recommendations for action.

6 Although one institution was reminded of the need for 'proactive consideration of the implications of recruiting large numbers of single country international students', and another of the desirability of keeping under review the range of support services required by an increasing number of international students, there is evidence in the reports of strategic approaches to the support of international students and an awareness of the challenges involved in recruiting large numbers of students whose first language is not English.

7 A strategic aim of one institution was 'to maintain and enhance the recruitment and support of international students'. Another institution, which considered that adequate provision was already in place to support international students, was targeting additional resources to provide a more 'wrap around' service for this group. One institution with a relatively small proportion of international students was found to take a strategically supportive role, while another, on the recommendation of an external consultant, had increased central control and direction in the recruitment

and support of international students. Another institution had set up an International Student Experience Working Group, with both staff and student representatives, to review its provision of assistance for international students; a task group had also been established to implement recommendations for action.

8 Among the challenges identified by institutions were the desirability of a common policy framework to improve coordination of international student support between central departments and schools; the need to provide additional, integrated and continuing support for international students; the effect of overseas students numerically dominating classes; the pressures on careers services from the special demands of overseas students, many of whom returned home after graduation; the difficulties faced by overseas postgraduate students in attaining 'the level of independent study expected of graduates'; and the desirability of providing cultural awareness training for academic and support staff with responsibility for international students.

### Features of good practice

9 Consideration of the published institutional audit reports shows the following features of good practice relating to arrangements for international students:

- the pre-session courses and orientation programmes for international students provided by the Centre for Academic and Professional Literacy Studies [Institute of Education, University of London, paragraphs 72, 159]
- the English language support for overseas students provided by the Learning and Teaching Unit [School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, paragraphs 122, 299 iv]
- the support for international students provided through a partnership between Student Services and Academic Services [Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, paragraphs 65, 96, 147 vii]
- the arrangements for the induction of EU, home and overseas students [College of St Mark and St John, paragraphs 101, 189 iii]
- the special measures taken to support international students; in particular the effectiveness with which the International Adviser, the schools, and the Guild work together to support international students [Aston University, paragraphs 113, 123, 253 ii]
- the support offered to international students [University of Essex, paragraphs 123, 124, 177, 228 ii]
- the commitment of staff to providing academic and pastoral support for students, including induction arrangements for overseas students [University of Buckingham, paragraphs 83, 136 ii]
- the consistent commitment of the University to its support of students, including international students, and their learning [The Nottingham Trent University, paragraphs 118, 236 ii]
- the development of a strong and supportive culture of student support, including an induction programme and English language support for international students [University of Portsmouth, paragraphs 115, 119, 258 iii]

- the academic and pastoral support and guidance provided to students, including language support for international students [Writtle College, paragraphs 110, 112, 182 iv]
- the University's support for its students whether domiciled in the UK or overseas [Loughborough University, paragraphs 130, 317 vii].

10 The number of features of good practice in the arrangements for the support of international students needs to be put in the wider context of the numerous reports which, while not explicitly identifying features of good practice, noted more than one area where the institution's arrangements were more than adequate or were regarded with approval by the international students met by the audit team. These included:

- The Royal Academy of Music [paragraphs 59, 91, 92, 94, 108, 110]
- The Royal Veterinary College [paragraphs 115, 120, 143]
- Cumbria Institute of the Arts [paragraphs 107, 112]
- Trinity College of Music [paragraphs 99, 106, 126]
- University of Bristol [paragraphs 122, 192]
- University of Bath [paragraphs 103, 156]
- Brunel University [paragraphs 96, 122, 125]
- University of Reading [paragraphs 76, 78, 81, 135, 148]
- University of Salford [paragraphs 96, 147, 166]
- University of Southampton [paragraphs 64, 94, 129]
- University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology [paragraphs 79, 82]
- Coventry University [paragraphs 130, 186, 194]
- University of Wolverhampton [paragraphs 145, 158, 161, 235].

## Themes

11 This part of the paper focuses on themes emerging from references relating to international students in the reports of audits undertaken in 2002-04. These can be grouped into the following broad areas:

- organisation of support
- information
- orientation and induction
- English language support
- academic and personal support
- representation and feedback arrangements.

### Organisation of support

12 The reports reveal a variety of ways in which support for international students can be organised, dependent on the size of the institution and the number of students recruited. In some small institutions a single, often part-time, International Students' Officer, Tutor or Adviser was found to provide expert support. One specialist institution that claimed to place 'considerable emphasis on supporting international students', employed a part-time International Students' Officer with responsibility for 'creating a supportive environment for international students by working closely with academic and administrative colleagues, and by acting as a point of contact and source of advice and help for international students'. In other institutions, responsibility for the support of international students lay with a section of the student welfare services or the equivalent administrative department.

13 Most institutions with significant numbers of international students had established international offices, sometimes with combined responsibility for home students studying abroad. In some cases, recruitment and support responsibilities were separated, but where audit reports describe the work of International Offices they appear to offer assistance from the point of application, through induction to graduation. In this context, one International Office provided 'a complete service that starts before the student leaves their home country and continues with orientation and induction events and a full range of advice and support to help new students to contact the services that they need', while another, with a remit to recruit and support international students, provided welcoming, induction, welfare and social support through an international student adviser.

14 In addition to central support from international offices and officers and dedicated support within schools and departments, audit reports noted the support provided by student unions. The Welfare Service of one Students' Union offered help and advice to international students at the application stage and upon enrolment and another Students' Union had a designated international students' officer: international students told one audit team that they valued highly the support provided by the officer.

15 It is clear from the audit reports that institutions appreciate the importance of integrating support systems and of keeping them under review. For example, one report found that an administrative services review had been very effective in focusing attention on the needs of international students [University of Essex, paragraph 124] and in another report 'the effectiveness with which the International Adviser, the schools and the [Student] Guild worked together to support international students' was specifically identified as a feature of good practice [Aston University, 113].

### Information

16 The provision of accurate information on academic programmes and support services is particularly important in the case of international students, for many of whom coming to the UK may be a 'leap of faith', made on the basis of the international reputation of institutions.



17 In one institution the audit report noted the provision of a prospectus-in-brief for international students. This contained information on the application process, travel, fees and general finances, scholarships, English language requirements and support services, with links to relevant web pages [Writtle College, 112]. In other institutions similar information could be found on web pages dedicated to international students.

18 One audit report noted that international students who had met the audit team had commented that they found the supplementary information in a pre-arrivals handbook to be 'especially useful' [Aston University, 197], while another report commented that international students had observed that the pre-arrival information sent to them was good and well organised. International students who accepted places in one institution were sent an extra package of information that addressed 'the specific issues that might be encountered by a student with no previous experience of the UK'. The recruitment service used by one small specialist institution to find students in the United States also provided useful and accurate pre-enrolment information and contacts.

19 Several institutions provided comprehensive guides, handbooks or information packs for international students on arrival; in one case there were separate guides for students from specific countries. In one institution, the International Handbook was found to be relatively comprehensive, 'particularly with regard to students' social and pastoral life', but it was suggested that 'overseas students might benefit from more comprehensive information on academic issues, guidance and support at an early stage'.

20 In general, international students who met institutional audit teams praised the quality of information highly and, in one case, were said to be 'emphatic about the extent, availability and accuracy of information available about their studies, both pre-entry and on-programme' - a comment which could also stand as a summary of the views of students in a second institution. In another institution, international students who met the audit team in the course of a discipline audit trail told it that they had 'found the programme expectations exceptionally clear and were surprised at the level of detail' in the information provided for them.

### Orientation and induction

21 It is clear from the audit reports that institutions appreciate that international students require more extensive induction than home students, and that early contacts and careful orientation enable students to settle more quickly and give them the confidence to refer themselves for any support they might need. It was reported that one institution which recruited a large number of international students held pre-departure meetings 'in some students' home countries with speakers from the University and the International Office'; these meetings were said to be appreciated as they helped to answer queries from students before they arrived at the University.

22 In another institution, which offered international access programmes in collaboration with two of its partner institutions, international students who met the audit team at the awarding institution 'testified to the effectiveness of the work carried out by the University's International Office and International Adviser to support them as they began studying in the UK' [Aston University, 123]. Similarly,

international students at a small specialist institution were offered the opportunity to attend a pre-sessional course 'to improve their English language skills, meet their tutors and receive a special induction to living and studying in the UK' [Royal Academy of Music, 92]. Likewise, in another small and specialist institution, international MSc students commented that they had been encouraged to take a pre-sessional course at a larger institution.

23 Nearly all institutions with substantial numbers of international students were found to provide separate or extended induction and orientation arrangements, ranging in duration from a day to a week [Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, 65; University of Portsmouth, 125]. The International Students Advisory Service in one institution organised a 'meet and greet' service for international students at major arrival points, a two to three-day programme during the introductory week and a drop in welcome lounge during the first two weeks.

24 A particular feature of induction and orientation arrangements was mentoring or 'buddying' schemes for new international students. One audit report recorded that international students had been able to confirm the nature of the arrangements to induct them into life at the University and their studies, and that these included the provision of initial additional support through existing students (known as 'Aunties') and longer-term access to 'buddy' support, again by existing students [Aston University, 113]. In another institution a buddy scheme provided a meet, greet and assist service for new international students, while in a third institution, the report noted that a 'structured and evaluated peer mentoring scheme' was regarded as valuable for both the mentor and the mentee.

25 The audit report for another small specialist institution noted that it had introduced a buddy scheme in recognition of 'the challenges faced by international students coping with a different language, society and culture'; new students with particular language difficulties were teamed with other students from the same department and this was said to 'ease the period of adjustment and promote better communication between student groups'.

### English language support

26 Specialist language support is essential for international students whose first language is not English and the audit reports reveal several different ways of delivering it. 'The importance of English language proficiency to academic success and social integration' had led one institution to develop a year-long Foundation Programme for potential students who needed to improve their English language skills before starting their studies. Other institutions offered pre-sessional classes in English for academic purposes or diagnostic testing as part of induction. In one institution, the team was able to confirm in meetings with international students the 'excellent quality of support' provided by a Centre for Academic and Professional Literacy Studies which offered, among other learning opportunities in academic literacy and study skills, pre-sessional courses and orientation programmes, open academic literacy sessions, individual and open writing workshops and oral English sessions [Institute of Education, University of London, 72].

27 The need to provide long-term support is indicated in one report. The team noted that the issue of language support for international students had been raised on a number of occasions through the annual monitoring process and in the reports of external examiners. Students were able, however, to confirm that the matter had been addressed by a student language mentoring scheme and support from an English as a foreign language tutor. Other small specialist institutions were found to provide similar language tutorial support, in one case with the assistance of a local language school [Writtle College, 112]. In most cases, however, specialist English Language Teaching Units or Centres provided support to international students who required it [University of Portsmouth, 119]. In one institution, the English Language Unit offered classes that focused on particular skills at different levels as well as drop-in clinics; in another international students were said to value highly the provision by the English Language Teaching Centre of English language support 'at no cost for themselves and family members'.

### Academic and personal support

28 In the course of conducting discipline audit trails, audit teams noted examples of the provision of additional academic guidance and support for international students. In some schools or departments audit teams met members of staff with the remit of supporting international students. In others they noted that students were given additional tutorials [Loughborough University, 122]. One team reported 'imaginative concepts' to support international students which included the use in one department of tutors covering geographical areas, such as Eastern Europe, to complement personal tutors. Another team noted a scheme to link international students with home students on the same programme. Although there is little information in the reports specifically on additional academic support for postgraduate students from overseas, the existence in one institution of a separate Faculty and Dean of Postgraduate Studies was clearly of considerable benefit to both taught and research postgraduates from overseas.

29 International students in one institution reported that feedback to them on their progress had undergone a radical change for the better over the previous few years. The monitoring of the comparative progress of international students is noted in several reports. In one institution such 'exemplary' monitoring had led to the introduction of a new diagnostic test in English language for international students, and in another to adjustments to the curriculum of a postgraduate course in recognition of the fact that 'students coming to the UK for the first time might need a chance to settle into the course'.

30 In the course of a discipline audit trail, an audit team learnt that a decrease in the number and proportion of first-class awards and a rise in the number of lower seconds and unclassified degrees had been attributed to the level of support offered to international students. As a consequence, the relevant school had taken action to improve the support given to international students entering directly into their final year. International students met by the audit team were able to confirm that 'the level of support in terms of information, induction, access to tutors and support services were good and examples were given of staff being proactive in the support they provided'.

31 In a number of cases, audit reports found that specialist personal support for international students was mainly the responsibility of International Officers or Advisers. Assistance was provided on visa applications and renewals and other immigration matters. In one institution the International Students' Officer, who was responsible for creating a supportive environment for international students by working closely with academic and administrative colleagues, and by acting as a point of contact and source of advice and help, held regular 'surgeries' to support the specific welfare needs of overseas students. A specialist student counsellor in another institution dealt with cross cultural matters and issues. In several institutions the personal support available to international students included social activities: one International Students Advisory Service organised a social programme throughout the year, including a group for the spouses of international students; in another institution the International Office and the associated International Society coordinated social activities in addition to providing a range of support services, including literature giving guidance on 'cultural and related matters'.

### Representation and feedback arrangements

32 Several audit reports comment on separate arrangements for the representation of international students. In one institution, the interests of international students were recognised in the committee structure by a 'Student and International Liaison Committee' - the terms of reference of which included acting as a forum for international students to raise issues affecting their experience and as a forum for the discussion of any matters affecting the institution's provision for overseas students. An International Students' Group had been established in one institution; in another an International Panel monitored the student experience and recommended action across the institution. In order to ensure adequate representation at programme level, one institution had invited departments to consider additional representation on student-staff liaison committee for minority groups, including international students. Students' Unions were also concerned to ensure representation for international students: one had arranged specific representation for international students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels on its Student Council; another, in recognition of the fact that the level of engagement with the system for student representation varied between different parts of the student body, had reviewed its structures and processes with the aim of ensuring appropriate representation of all students, including international students. International students who met one audit team were able to confirm separately their confidence that they could readily make representations on matters of concern and individual problems, for example, via the Student Union's International Students Association.

33 Feedback from international students on their experience was sought in a variety of ways. One institution undertook evaluation of the pre-entry information provided to international students in an International Student Survey, but did not include specific questions for international students in its Student Satisfaction Survey.

34 Induction arrangements for international students were evaluated in one institution by means of a user survey, while another had used focus groups and introduced changes as a result. One audit report described the outcome of a meeting with international students, which had confirmed comments in the student written submission that a recent survey of international students showed a broad level of satisfaction with the support they had received.

### **Conclusions**

35 The information from the 70 audit reports published by November 2004 suggests that institutions with substantial numbers of international students appreciate the importance of meeting students' expectations, and providing specialist academic and personal support. There is evidence that, in anticipation of a growth in the numbers of students from overseas, institutions have been keeping support services under review and dedicating extra resources with a view to enhancing the experience of international students.

36 Almost without exception, the international students who met audit teams were satisfied with the information provided to them before and after their arrival in the UK, and were appreciative of the quality of the academic and personal support available.

## **Appendix 1 - The institutional audit reports**

### **2002-03**

University College Chichester, February 2003  
The Royal Veterinary College, February 2003  
Cumbria Institute of the Arts, March 2003  
Institute of Education, University of London, March 2003  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, March 2003  
Middlesex University, March 2003  
Royal Academy of Music, March 2003  
Royal College of Art, March 2003  
University of Cambridge, April 2003  
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, April 2003  
Bath Spa University College, May 2003  
University of Lincoln, May 2003  
London Business School, May 2003  
Newman College of Higher Education, May 2003  
Norwich School of Art and Design, May 2003  
Rose Bruford College, May 2003  
Royal College of Music, May 2003  
Royal Northern College of Music, May 2003  
The School of Pharmacy, University of London, May 2003  
College of St Mark and St John, May 2003  
The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, May 2003  
Trinity and All Saints College, May 2003  
Trinity College of Music, May 2003  
Royal College of Nursing Institute, July 2003

### **2003-04**

University of Bath, October 2003  
University of Bradford, November 2003  
University of Buckingham, November 2003  
University of Essex, November 2003  
University of Exeter, November 2003  
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, November 2003  
University of Sheffield, November 2003  
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, December 2003  
Royal Agricultural College, December 2003  
University of Southampton, December 2003  
St Martin's College, Lancaster, December 2003  
University of Surrey, Roehampton, December 2003

University of York, December 2003  
University of East Anglia, January 2004  
University of Durham, February 2004  
University of Liverpool, February 2004  
Writtle College, February 2004  
Bournemouth University, March 2004  
The Institute of Cancer Research, March 2004  
University of Kent, March 2004  
University of Leeds, March 2004  
Loughborough University, March 2004  
Open University, March 2004  
University of Oxford, March 2004  
University of Salford, March 2004  
University of Warwick, March 2004  
University of Wolverhampton, March 2004  
Aston University, April 2004  
University of Birmingham, April 2004  
University of Bristol, April 2004  
University of Central Lancashire, April 2004  
Coventry University, April 2004  
The London Institute, April 2004  
University of Portsmouth, April 2004  
Anglia Polytechnic University, May 2004  
University of Brighton, May 2004  
Brunel University, May 2004  
University of Keele, May 2004  
The Nottingham Trent University, May 2004  
University of Reading, May 2004  
University of Sussex, May 2004  
Wimbledon School of Art, May 2004  
University of Greenwich, June 2004  
King's College London, June 2004  
University of Lancaster, June 2004  
The Manchester Metropolitan University, June 2004

## **Appendix 2 - Reports on specialist institutions**

The Royal Veterinary College, February 2003  
Cumbria Institute of the Arts, March 2003  
Institute of Education, University of London, March 2003  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, March 2003  
Royal Academy of Music, March 2003  
Royal College of Art, March 2003  
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, April 2003  
London Business School, May 2003  
Newman College of Higher Education, May 2003  
Norwich School of Art and Design, May 2003  
Rose Bruford College, May 2003  
Royal College of Music, May 2003  
Royal Northern College of Music, May 2003  
The School of Pharmacy, University of London, May 2003  
The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, May 2003  
Trinity and All Saints College, May 2003  
Trinity College of Music, May 2003  
Royal College of Nursing Institute, July 2003  
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, December 2003  
Royal Agricultural College, December 2003  
Writtle College, February 2004  
The Institute of Cancer Research, March 2004  
The London Institute, April 2004  
Wimbledon School of Art, May 2004



### Appendix 3 - Projected titles of *Outcomes...* papers

In most cases, *Outcomes...* papers will be no longer than 15 sides of A4. QAA retains copyright in the *Outcomes...* papers, but as noted earlier, they may be freely used, with acknowledgement.

Projected titles of *Outcomes...* papers in the first series are listed below.

Title	Publishing date (provisional)
Initial overview	April 2005
External examiners and their reports	April 2005
Programme specifications	April 2005
Staff support and development arrangements	October 2005
Student representation and feedback	November 2005
Programme monitoring arrangements	January 2006
Assessment of students	January 2006
Learning support resources (including VLEs)	January 2006
Validation, approval and periodic review	January 2006
Work-based and placement learning, and employability	March 2006
Arrangements for international students	March 2006
Progression and completion statistics	March 2006
Collaborative provision in the institutional audit reports	March 2006
Academic advice, guidance and supervision	April 2006
Specialist institutions and institutional audit	May 2006
Institutions' frameworks for managing quality and standards	May 2006
Subject benchmark statements	tbc
The framework for higher education qualifications	tbc

## Appendix 4 - Methodology

The methodology followed in analysing the institutional audit reports uses the headings set out in Annex H of the *Handbook for institutional audit: England* to subdivide the Summary, Main report and Findings sections of the institutional audit reports into broad areas. An example from the Main report is 'The institution's framework for managing quality and standards, including collaborative provision'.

For each published report, the text was taken from the documents published on QAA's website and converted to plain text format. The resulting files were checked for accuracy and coded into sections following the template used to construct the institutional audit reports. In addition, the text of each report was tagged with information providing the date the report was published and some basic characteristics of the institution (base data). The reports were then introduced into a qualitative research software package, QSR N6®. The software provides a wide range of tools to support indexing and searching and allows features of interest to be coded for further investigation.

An audit team's judgements, its identification of features of good practice, and its recommendations appear at two points in an institutional audit report: the Summary and at the end of the Findings; it is only in the latter, however, that cross references to the paragraphs in the Main report are to be found, and it is here that the grounds for identifying a feature of good practice, offering a recommendation and making a judgement are set out. These cross references have been used to locate features of good practice and recommendations to the particular sections of the report to which they refer.

Individual papers in the *Outcomes...* series are compiled by QAA staff and experienced institutional auditors. To assist in compiling the papers, reports produced by QSR N6® have been made available to provide a broad picture of the overall distribution of features of good practice and recommendations in particular areas, as seen by the audit teams.

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