



Wales Evangelical School of Theology

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

April 2013

Key findings about Wales Evangelical School of Theology

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in April 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of the University of Chester.

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

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the flexible academic management structures, well suited to the needs of a small institution (paragraph 1.2)
- the varied and imaginative methods of assessment (paragraph 1.7)
- the carefully integrated range of teaching and learning methods (paragraph 2.3)
- the comprehensive and integrated methods of student support (paragraphs 2.6-2.8)
- the comprehensive and ambitious use of electronic media, including the virtual learning environment, website and social media (paragraphs 2.12 and 3.1-3.4).

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- analyse systematically statistical trends in student achievement and progression (paragraph 1.8).

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

- introduce systems to help identify good practice and ensure its dissemination (paragraph 1.9)
- formalise its teaching and learning strategy (paragraph 2.4)
- review its method of recording the observation of teaching to reflect the focus on higher education (paragraph 2.5)
- develop its policy on the management of public information (paragraph 3.8)
- review its mechanisms for gathering student feedback on the information available to them (paragraph 3.9).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Wales Evangelical School of Theology (the provider; the School), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the University of Chester. The review was carried out by Mr Paul Chamberlain, Dr Gwynne Harries, Ms Francine Norris (reviewers), and Mr Robert Jones (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding body, and meetings with staff and with students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- the regulations of the University of Chester.

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

The history of the provider dates back to the foundation of the Barry School of Evangelism in 1936. The Evangelical Theological College of Wales was formed as a new independent Bible college in 1984 and admitted its first students in September 1985 at Bryntirion House, Bridgend. The College was renamed as Wales Evangelical School of Theology (the School) in 2005. There are currently 94 students, both campus-based and distance learning, enrolled at the School, of whom 77 are on higher education programmes.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, for all of which the University of Chester (the University) is the awarding body:

- BA (Hons) Theology/Bachelor of Divinity/Graduate Diploma in Theology (34)
- MTh Theology in a Scriptural Context (17)
- MA Contemporary Church Leadership (11)
- MPhil/PhD (8)

Note: The number of students on each programme is given in brackets. There are, in addition, seven non-accredited students.

The provider's stated responsibilities

The School has a significant level of autonomy in managing its curricular development, teaching, assessment and learning opportunities, subject to overall monitoring and review by the University. In addition to formal review, the School has developed a close working relationship with staff in the University's Theology Department Partner Office so that issues can be addressed promptly.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight

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

Recent developments

In the last 18 months there have been significant developments in the facilities and staffing at the School. Through the support of SaRang Community Church in Seoul, South Korea, the School has been able to develop a modern teaching and meeting facility, the SaRang Thomas Centre. This provides four well-equipped teaching rooms and a hall, with up-to-date audio-visual facilities, which can seat 250 people. The IT facilities are currently being updated through the provision of new file servers and desk computers. The library was also considerably reorganised and expanded during the summer of 2012, and further developments to integrate independent study facilities and the print resources are planned as more space becomes available.

Staffing has also been developed through the following appointments: a Chief Operating Officer, who is responsible for marketing and non-faculty staff; a full-time librarian; a housekeeper; and a chef to provide full catering for staff and students. From September 2013, two new full-time faculty members will take up posts at the School, with the aim of adding further diversity to the curriculum and a more active engagement with churches within the UK.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. They produced a submission, based on the answers to a carefully constructed questionnaire, supplemented by open-ended expressions of student opinion. It provided a clear picture of the student experience, which the team found very helpful. Students met the review coordinator during the preparatory meeting and the team during the review visit. Both meetings were highly productive.

Detailed findings about Wales Evangelical School of Theology

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The School has established a robust and well-documented relationship with the University of Chester. Particular responsibilities are clearly defined through formal agreements and the School has established highly effective processes to ensure that it fulfils its delegated responsibilities for academic standards. A University Link Tutor based in the specialist academic department provides regular contact with the School, and the Registrar based at the College has regular contact with the University Quality Office.

1.2 The School is a small institution, but is responsible for programmes covering a wide range of academic levels and modes of study, including a significant proportion of distance learning. It is also responsible for academic staff who include full-time and visiting lecturers and research supervisors. Clearly defined but flexible internal executive management and committee structures ensure the appropriate management of academic standards. An Academic Board meets weekly during term time. It operates as a management body responsible for planning and operation in order to prevent duplication and ensure coordination, communication and a balance in the overall provision of training and study opportunities. Recent meetings of the Board have addressed carefully structured action plans. The Board schedules its business so that designated areas of business are dealt with on a rotational basis, with the chairmanship changing accordingly. This flexible arrangement suits the small provision very well. The Principal has overall responsibility for standards and quality. He is supported by academic directors responsible for undergraduate studies, postgraduate studies and research. Their membership of the Academic Board integrates the committee and executive management structures. The flexible academic management structures, well suited to the needs of a small institution, represent **good practice**.

1.3 Because of circumstances beyond its control, the School has been required to seek a transfer of the validating arrangements for its programmes. Through careful internal management and close cooperation with awarding bodies, an efficient and sensitive phased approach to the transfer of provision has been managed with minimal disruption to the student experience.

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

1.4 The management of academic standards is informed by extensive and appropriate use of external reference points. External examiners identify appropriate achievement in relation to *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and standards are confirmed through the academic management processes of the University. All programmes are designed with close reference to the subject benchmark statement for theology, which is thoroughly cross-referenced to module descriptors and intended learning outcomes. Graduate characteristics are clearly defined.

1.5 External examiners confirm awareness of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and this is reflected in internal documents. Appropriate use is made of the Quality Code in annual staff appraisal, new staff induction, the periodic review of modules and the development of new programmes. Scope exists for a more structured approach to

staff development to ensure that all staff are aware of the national development of the Quality Code.

1.6 The School has enhanced its reputation through its well-developed research culture and extensive publications record as well as its specialist contacts in ministry and the national and international academic community. In partnership with the University and its previous awarding body, it has satisfied the relevant Indicators of the Quality Code (*Chapter B11: Postgraduate research programmes*) in providing a research environment that secures academic standards for doing research and expertise in support of research methods. This is clearly illustrated, for example, by the established and robust procedures for appointing external research supervisors and the clear documentary evidence from the examining of PhD theses. The level of achievement is illustrated by the award of a PhD to 55 students in less than 20 years and the launch in 2011 by an academic publisher in the United States of a monograph imprint specifically for the School.

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

1.7 External examiners confirm that appropriate academic standards are being met through the application of robust verification and moderation procedures that ensure consistency in marking. They also praise the diversity and imaginative nature of assessment employed. Students emphasise the innovative nature of assessment tasks, for example an assignment where the student writes as a scholar to another scholar offering a critique of their work. An external examiner commented about this assessment that it demanded a great deal from students and was, in itself, a fine tool for learning as well as assessment. The varied and imaginative methods of assessment represent **good practice**.

1.8 Annual monitoring is undertaken in response to the requirements of the awarding body. A recent external periodic review, led by the University, has had a positive outcome. Although the requirements of the University are being met, opportunities are being missed in the reporting process for a more systematic use of statistical data and more thorough cohort analysis. It is **advisable** for the School to introduce processes to analyse systematically statistical trends in student achievement and progression.

1.9 Good practice is shared informally, recorded at Academic Board and increasingly noted through the virtual learning environment. Although valuable, these process do not ensure reflection, analysis and further application of good practice. It would be **desirable** for the School to introduce systems to help identify good practice and ensure its dissemination.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The School has effective mechanisms in place for the management and enhancement of learning opportunities that reflect those outlined for academic standards in paragraphs 1.1-1.2.

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

2.2 Good use is made of the Quality Code and the subject benchmark statement for theology, as described in paragraphs 1.4-1.6. These reference points support the management and enhancement of learning opportunities at the School. The Quality Code is a highlighted document on the front page of the School's virtual learning environment.

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

2.3 Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Many are eminent in their field. There are clear expectations of tutors' responsibilities for lesson planning and the delivery of an agreed scheme of work for each taught programme of study. Staff maintain a careful balance between the discipline of academic study and the philosophical concepts of the subject matter itself. The teaching and learning is clearly related to vocational requirements but the School maintains an effective balance between theory, practice and understanding through this provision. Both staff and students demonstrated that the teaching and learning methods are carefully integrated and adapted to the particular type of study that the students are pursuing. The carefully integrated range of teaching and learning methods represents **good practice**.

2.4 Notwithstanding this feature of good practice, the School has no formal teaching and learning strategy. While the School's informal understanding of teaching and learning methods is currently effective, the formulation of such a strategy would enable the School to make explicit the assumptions underlying its teaching methods, which could then inform its processes of peer review and staff development. It would consequently be **desirable** for the School to formalise its teaching and learning strategy.

2.5 Teaching is regularly monitored. Staff engage in annual peer review, while visiting lecturers are observed every other year. All new staff are observed shortly after joining the staff team. Areas for development are noted during the observation and discussed with the member of staff being observed. However, the form used in teaching observations is limited in its scope. For example, it does not require comment on whether the lesson has stretched the students, fostered critical analysis and evaluation or encouraged independent learning. It would be **desirable** for the School to review its method of recording the observation of teaching to reflect the focus on higher education.

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

2.6 The School has effective systems in place to support students from admission to the end of their studies. Pre-entry guidance is clear and, following application, all students are interviewed. The interview process includes guidance and feedback on how to improve when students are starting their programme. This is appreciated by students. Both campus-based and distance-learning students are required to attend the School's induction week at the start of each academic year, the structure, content and delivery of which are highly regarded by the students. In addition to completing all the required administrative elements of admission, students are given the opportunity to attend taster and introductory lectures and are provided with comprehensive access to documentation, both in electronic and hard copy format. This enables students to make informed choices for elective modules and is a feature that they confirmed as very helpful. The comprehensive and integrated methods of student support represent **good practice** (see also paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8).

2.7 Academic support for students is thorough and successfully addresses a range of individual needs. There is a close working relationship between students and staff that fosters a positive and supportive learning environment. Students enthusiastically praised the exceptional helpfulness of their tutors. Students are supported both by their regular tutorials and by written and oral feedback on their assignments. This support assists students both pastorally and academically in the development of their learning by encouraging self-criticality and practical performance skills, and showing how they can improve all aspects of their work. Ready access to members of staff at all levels, including the Principal, adds greatly to this support.

2.8 Module feedback, external examiners' reports and the contribution of student representatives are used to inform the School's monitoring of quality of learning opportunities. As well as the formal opportunities for students to be consulted, they also provide feedback informally in tutorials and shared breaks and meal times. Students appreciate the way the School seek their views and confirmed that it is responsive to their feedback. Both in the student submission and in the meeting with the students, examples were cited of significant changes made in response to student input.

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

2.9 The induction procedures for newly appointed members of staff are thorough. In addition to a general induction, all staff, including visiting lecturers, receive training on marking. In the first year of their appointment and they are given feedback on their marking. From the comments of external examiners, this training is clearly successful.

2.10 Staff have opportunities to identify their training needs as part of the School's peer review process and during their annual appraisal with the Principal. They are encouraged to access a range of staff development opportunities. The School provides an annual training day and additional training in marking. Staff attend University partner information days. In some cases, staff are able to undertake short-term sabbaticals. This year, staff have taken advantage of sabbaticals, conferences, and opportunities to present papers at research seminars and University partner information days. The School is aware of some deficiencies in its record keeping of staff development activities, which it is in the process of rectifying.

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

2.11 Students are able to access a range of resources appropriate to both the delivery mode and level of their course. The School provides teaching, library and IT facilities on-site along with dining and residential accommodation. There is also a comprehensive virtual learning environment (see paragraph 3.4). These resources are accessible to campus-based, part-time and distance-learning students and are effectively timetabled to allow for blocks of campus-based activity for all students at key points of the academic year.

2.12 The library facilities have recently been upgraded and are now good. In particular, the School has improved the alignment between the library provision and the academic programmes and also developed online study support material. There is an effective postal and electronic service for providing texts to distance-learning students. Students regard the library as a key strength of the provision and are positive about the level of support they receive.

2.13 During the visit, the team learned that the students had significant concerns about the capacity of the computer network to support their studies. The School is seeking to

address these concerns through the development of an acceptable use policy as well as investment in new equipment.

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

3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 The School uses a range of mainly electronic means to communicate with students, staff and other stakeholders. The principal vehicle is the School website, which has recently been redesigned and includes information for prospective students, alumni and the wider community. The site provides comprehensive information on the programmes offered. There are clear links to the validating University and other partner organisations.

3.2 The School makes extensive use of both traditional and social media for marketing and communication purposes. The website provides links to a regular newsletter, and the School maintains social media sites aimed at communicating with alumni and current students.

3.3 Information to students is comprehensive. Students confirmed that pre-enrolment information provided is clear, accurate, and helpful. There is a range of student handbooks aimed at undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research students. At the point of registration, all students are given access to the University's portal through a secure login, which provides full information on its policies and procedures.

3.4 The virtual learning environment provides the main means of academic communication to students and staff and is effectively managed to ensure consistency of information to both campus-based and distance-learning students. There is careful differentiation in the teaching materials for use by these two groups, with additional structured learning materials specifically designed to support distance learning. The site also provides timetables and student handbooks and is linked to the School email, which ensures that staff and students are alerted to changes and new information on the site. There are some strong examples of the use of multimedia and discussion forums. Staff indicated their intention to continue to develop the site and to explore more innovative ways of engaging with distance learners. The comprehensive and ambitious use of electronic media, including the virtual learning environment, website and social media, represents **good practice** (see also paragraphs 2.12 and 3.1-3.3).

3.5 The School has produced two staff handbooks that provide a useful and focused summary of relevant policies and procedures tailored to the specific needs of lecturing and supervisory staff. They also provide guidance in relation to teaching and learning, including information about how to use the virtual learning environment. The handbooks are made available to all staff, including visiting lecturers and research supervisors.

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

3.6 The School ensures that public information is accurate and complete. Responsibility for final approval of all information rests with the Principal. The Chief Operating Officer is

responsible for managing external-facing information, including the website and the production of print media. There is a weekly meeting between the Principal, Chief Operating Officer and Resource Manager where any changes or updates are formally approved and implemented.

3.7 The virtual learning environment is regularly updated, which ensures its currency and effectiveness. Individual academic staff are responsible for the content of modules that they teach while general information is managed by a core team of academic, library and registry staff. The overall architecture of the site is maintained and managed by the Resource Manager. Any change to this requires the approval of the Principal.

3.8 The School's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information, as described above, are currently effective. However, they are informal and not fully documented. It would be **desirable** for the School to develop its policy on the management of public information.

3.9 The School does not formally seek student feedback about the accuracy of information. There are student feedback processes in operation, including module evaluation (see paragraph 2.8), but they do not specifically address issues of information. Students have a wide range of means of accessing information available to them. However, they do not consistently engage with the virtual learning environment or website and this has on occasions lead to perceptions of a lack of communication when key information has been missed. It would be **desirable** for the School to review its mechanisms for gathering student feedback on the information available to them.

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

Action plan³

Wales Evangelical School of Theology action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight April 2013						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by ⁴	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation ⁵
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the flexible academic management structures, well suited to the needs of a small institution (paragraph 1.2) 	<p>Further monitor academic board structure and effectiveness against School Mission and Aims</p> <p>Review annually with relevant staff and assess any need for change</p>	Review at close of academic year (June 2014)	Principal and all teaching/academic related staff	<p>Action points implemented within acceptable timescales</p> <p>Reports and so on presented within agreed timescales</p>	Principal	<p>Academic Board minutes</p> <p>Academic Board action point outcomes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the varied and imaginative methods of assessment (paragraph 1.7) 	<p>Further monitor these via academic boards (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)</p> <p>Disseminate any new ideas/strategies available (University</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual review and dissemination</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Programme leaders</p>	<p>Positive student feedback</p> <p>Staff/Peer feedback following dissemination</p>	Academic Board	<p>Academic Board minutes</p> <p>External examiner reports</p> <p>Student feedback</p>

³ The provider has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the provider's awarding body.

⁴ State a role, not a named individual.

⁵ Indicate how the actions will be evaluated once completed.

	of Chester/Higher Education Academy)	(June 2014)				Module descriptors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the carefully integrated range of teaching and learning methods (paragraph 2.3) 	<p>Further monitor academic board structure and effectiveness against the School Mission and aims</p> <p>Disseminate any new ideas/strategies available (University of Chester/Higher Education Academy)</p>	<p>Annual review and dissemination (June 2014)</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Programme leaders</p>	<p>Positive Student feedback</p> <p>Positive Peer Review</p> <p>Successful comparison with external reference points (Higher Education Academy/Chester/Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals)</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Academic Board minutes</p> <p>Peer review documentation</p> <p>Student feedback</p> <p>Module descriptors</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the comprehensive and integrated methods of student support (paragraphs 2.6-2.8) 	<p>Further monitor these via academic boards (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)</p>	<p>Weekly from September 2013</p> <p>Annual review and dissemination (June 2014)</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Personal tutors and support staff as appropriate</p>	<p>Good retention statistics</p> <p>Pastoral records (note confidentiality)</p> <p>Positive student feedback and staff (tutors and administrative) feedback</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Academic Board minutes</p> <p>Positive student feedback and staff (tutors and administrative) feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the comprehensive and ambitious use of electronic media, including the virtual learning environment, website and 	<p>Monitor use via available tools</p> <p>Promote to student body via study support lectures and tutorials, and emails</p>	<p>Website, and social media monthly from September 2013</p> <p>Virtual learning environment at undergraduate</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer, teaching staff in own areas, Librarian, Programme Administrator, Academic Registrar, Resources</p>	<p>Reports demonstrating growth in use from virtual learning environment, statistics from website, and social media statistical tools</p> <p>Include questions on</p>	<p>Principal, Chief Operating Officer and Academic Board</p>	<p>Review of reports at Information Technology management meetings</p>

social media (paragraphs 2.12 and 3.1-3.4)		level two times in a semester starting autumn 2013 and at postgraduate level triannually (linking to other quality processes)	Manager and the Social Media Coordinator All as appropriate	electronic media in student evaluations		
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse systematically statistical trends in student achievement and progression (paragraph 1.8) 	<p>Consult Registry at Chester and identify data gathered and how it is used</p> <p>Develop WEST data gathering and analysis systems</p>	<p>October 2013</p> <p>December 2013 and then each semester, or annually as appropriate</p>	<p>Academic Registrar and Programme Administrator</p> <p>Academic Registrar and Programme Administrator academic staff</p>	Semester and annual reports, containing accurate and clearly presented student data	Principal Academic Board	Review of reports and actions arising via Academic Board meeting minutes, and the Subject Assessment Board (the latter includes University of Chester Staff)
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce systems to help identify good practice and 	<p>Further develop in service recording</p> <p>Analysis of peer</p>	<p>October 2013</p> <p>End of</p>	Quality Manager, Human Resources Manager and programme leaders	Fully implemented virtual learning environment dissemination	Principal Academic Board	Virtual learning environment records

ensure its dissemination (paragraph 1.9)	review reports Establish dissemination mechanism via the virtual learning environment	Academic Year January 2014		mechanisms by spring term 2014		Subsequent peer reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise its teaching and learning strategy (paragraph 2.4) 	<p>Develop Teaching and Learning Policy and Strategy deriving from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and integrate to staff induction and continuing professional development</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the new policy to subsequent approval</p>	<p>February 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p>	Principal and programme leaders	<p>Policy approved and disseminated, documented induction and continuing professional development processes, Academic Board minutes and staff induction reports</p> <p>Positive feedback from teaching staff and students</p>	Principal Academic Board	<p>Teaching and Learning Strategy documentation</p> <p>Academic Board minutes</p> <p>Surveys and targeted questionnaires and the analysis of feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its method of recording the observation of teaching to reflect the focus on higher education (paragraph 2.5) 	<p>Consult with University of Chester Quality office on their peer review</p> <p>Review current review documentation in the</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>February 2014</p>	<p>Postgraduate Programme Leader, Undergraduate Programme Leader, Quality Coordinator and teaching staff</p>	Revised Peer Review Policy and Documentation	Principal Academic Board	<p>Peer review reports</p> <p>Academic Board</p>

	light of the QAA report and amend to enhance Train teaching staff in the new approach					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop its policy on the management of public information (paragraph 3.8) 	<p>Develop Policy and Procedures on public information</p> <p>Policy implementation and monitoring</p>	<p>February 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p>	<p>Principal, Chief Operating Officer, Academic Registrar, Programmes Administrator, Social Media Coordinator, Resources Manager and Quality Coordinator</p>	<p>Policy Document and Procedure Manual</p>	<p>Principal Academic Board</p>	<p>Academic Board minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its mechanisms for gathering student feedback on the information available to them (paragraph 3.9). 	<p>Consult with University of Chester Quality office on student data</p> <p>Develop data gathering tools and implement cycle of data capture and analysis</p> <p>Monitor and review data gathering tools, timescales and analysis</p>	<p>February 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p>	<p>Quality Coordinator and Academic Registrar</p>	<p>Report timetable and reporting structures</p>	<p>Principal Academic Board</p>	<p>Survey data/reports</p> <p>Academic Board minutes</p>

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).⁶

Academic Infrastructure The core guidance developed and maintained by QAA in partnership with the UK higher education community and used by QAA and higher education providers until 2011-12 for quality assurance of UK higher education. It has since been replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Quality Code**).

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

academic standards The standards set and maintained by higher education providers for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

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

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions which formed the core element of the **Academic Infrastructure** (now superseded by the **Quality Code**).

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

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

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

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

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*.

⁶ www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources, and specialist facilities (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.

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

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

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

provider A UK degree-awarding body or any other organisation that offers courses of higher education on behalf of a separate **awarding body** or **organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is being developed from 2011 to replace the **Academic Infrastructure** and will incorporate all its key elements along with additional topics and overarching themes.

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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

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