Anglia Ruskin University

Early Years Professional Status Audit by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

November 2012

Contents

Key findings about Anglia Ruskin University

As a result of its Early Years Professional Status Audit carried out in November 2012, the audit team (the team) considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the accreditation standards of awards and links to the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities and support available to EYPS candidates **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of the assessment and moderation systems and processes for EYPS **meets expectations**.

The team considers that the soundness of the Prime Organisation's present and likely future management of candidate data, financial data, internal staff and infrastructure **meets expectations**.

Good practice

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

- the guidance and support provided for those conducting interviews, which facilitates consistency of good practice across the partnership (paragraph 35).

Strengths

The team has identified the following **strengths**:

- the highly effective systems for the selection of candidates that ensure effective recruitment onto appropriate pathways and which contribute significantly to high levels of successful achievement on the Graduate Practitioner Pathway (paragraph 34)
- the extensive formal and informal communication mechanisms utilised that support collaborative modes of working and are valued by partners (paragraph 38)
- the support provided by mentors and tutors, which is valued highly by candidates and contributes effectively to successful candidate outcomes (paragraph 23)
- the candidate forums in operation at Edge Hill University, which are a useful vehicle for gathering candidate feedback and are worthy of further dissemination and consideration across the partnership (paragraph 13)
- the systems for data tracking, handling and monitoring, which ensure that the Prime Organisation has access to timely management information and is able to respond effectively to the requirements of the Teaching Agency (paragraph 27).

Recommendations

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

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

- review, with its delivery partners, the process for responding to and monitoring external moderator reports to ensure that all issues raised and all responses are clearly articulated (paragraph 4)
- formalise systems and processes for obtaining feedback from placement providers and employers (paragraph 15)
- clarify and formalise the process for selection and appointment of mentors, including the criteria to be used, to enhance the transparency of the current systems and secure equality of opportunity (paragraph 24)
- enhance the current marketing strategy for the EYPS programme area with delivery partners to enable a more focused, coordinated approach, targeted at the Teaching Agency recruitment targets (paragraph 33).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Audit[1] conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Anglia Ruskin University (the Prime Organisation). The purpose of the audit is to provide accessible information which indicates whether Prime Organisations have in place:

- effective means of ensuring that the award of EYPS is robust, rigorous and consistent in quality and standards across all pathways
- effective means of enhancing the quality of EYPS provision, particularly by building on information gained through monitoring, internal and external audits, and feedback from stakeholders.

The audit focuses on how the Prime Organisation discharges its stated responsibilities in seven key areas:

- the management of EYPS candidate outcomes
- approach to quality improvement
- approach to safeguarding and welfare of children
- approach to candidate support
- approach to data management
- approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates
- staff management and infrastructure.

The audit applies to those pathways leading to the award of Early Years Professional Status that the Teaching Agency has contracted with the Prime Organisations. The audit was carried out by Mr John Deane (auditor), Mrs Viki Faulkner (auditor) and Mr Alan Weale (QAA officer).

The audit team conducted the audit in agreement with the Prime Organisation and in accordance with the *Early Years Professional Status Audit: Handbook for Prime Organisations and delivery partners.*[2] Evidence in support of the audit included a written self-evaluation document with supporting documentary evidence, meetings with staff from the Prime Organisation and delivery partners, a meeting with placement provider representatives and mentors, and telephone interviews with candidates.

The audit team used as a key reference point the *Handbook for Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Prime Organisations and their delivery partners (April 2012)* provided by the Teaching Agency.

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

Anglia Ruskin University is the Prime Organisation contracted with the Teaching Agency to manage EYPS provision. It runs all four EYPS pathways through MPowernet, a business unit within the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education. The Prime Organisation has two delivery partners, Edge Hill University and the University of East London, which respectively cover parts of the North West, North East and London regions.

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx

At the time of the audit, the Prime Organisation (and each of its delivery partners) provided the following pathways:

- Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP)
- Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP)
- Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP)
- Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP).

Statistical data relating to these pathways can be found in Annex 1.

The Prime Organisation's stated responsibilities

The provision focuses on the Department for Education contract objectives and the four strategic priorities for the Department for Education and Teaching Agency within the context of local provision and local needs. All three higher education institutions within the partnership consider this an important role to enhance existing academic offerings in developing effective early years education at a local level.

Anglia Ruskin University and Edge Hill University both have established EYPS provision and are working closely to align processes to benefit from combined best practice. The University of East London (UEL) is new to EYPS, and Anglia Ruskin University - as the Prime Organisation - has been managing and delivering the pathways alongside the UEL team to build expertise to enable UEL to take greater responsibility for running the pathways.

Detailed findings about Anglia Ruskin University

1   Management of EYPS candidate outcomes

1   Anglia Ruskin University, as the Prime Organisation, is effective in its management of EYPS candidate outcomes. It works closely with its delivery partners, local employers and local authorities to recruit and retain candidates, and provides individualised candidate learning experiences and support in line with the performance expectations of the Teaching Agency's *Handbook for Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Prime Organisations and their delivery partners (April 2012).*

2   The security of programme standards is maintained through an appropriate system of internal and external moderation.

3   Teaching Agency guidance has been used to identify and recruit an appropriate external moderator, and the process for external moderation is clearly set out in a guidance document produced by the Prime Organisation and observed to be followed. External moderator reports are detailed and provide comprehensive feedback to the Prime Organisation. Delivery partners confirm that external moderator reports are shared with them and individual feedback is cascaded to assessors via one-to-one sessions and monthly meetings.

4   Actions arising from the annual external moderation report feed into MPowernet's overarching action and incident log, which covers all of MPowernet's activity and not just that related to the EYPS pathways. This log is used to track required activity. Although it is clear that some of the actions suggested by the external moderator are recorded on this log, the moderator made numerous quality improvement suggestions in July 2012 which were not logged (such as the opportunity for interviews to be made mandatory for all candidates where an assessment of 'not met' has been made, rather than leaving this to the assessor's discretion). The team was not assured that this point, and others, had been addressed explicitly under the current system of recording actions in the Action and Incident Log. The team recommends that it is **desirable** for Anglia Ruskin University to review, with its delivery partners, the process for responding to and monitoring external moderator reports to ensure that all issues raised and all responses are clearly articulated.

5   The Prime Organisation has put in place a clear internal moderation process that is shared across all delivery partners and implemented effectively across the partnership. Initial training and ongoing briefing updates have been provided for internal moderators and a single report pro forma is utilised by all delivery partners, which ensures consistency of practice. Internal moderation windows are set by the Prime Organsiation and mirrored across the partnership. Consistency is further promoted through the opportunity provided for delivery partners to participate in cross-moderation events, although it is recognised that these have been limited in number.

6   Assessment is confirmed through internal and external moderation processes - and through candidate work observed during the team's setting visit - to be fit for purpose and in line with Teaching Agency guidelines. The external moderator report (August 2012) highlighted evidence of very strong assessment practice in the work sampled, with the majority of assessors following guidance diligently. The team noted that the best practice in using clear coding to identify age ranges, identified by the external moderator, has already been cascaded throughout the partnership and is now being adopted widely.

7   All candidates undertake both formative (Development Review) and summative assessment in line with Teaching Agency guidance. The Prime Organisation's Self

Evaluation states that the assessment process is well regarded by 93 per cent of candidates. Earlier concerns raised by a small number of GEP candidates regarding preparation for the Development Review have been swiftly followed up by the Prime Organisation and this has formed the basis of an updating session for trainers, mentors and assessors and a review of the guidance presented in the candidate handbook.

8   Candidates interviewed by the team were very positive about their experience on the EYPS programme and felt that it had been effective and useful in their professional development. This was reflected in statements such as: 'it helped to build confidence in my own leadership ability', 'it opened my eyes to how important my own job role is' and 'helping to improve the status of the profession'. Destination data from the January 2012 GPP programme confirmed that 93 per cent of candidates rated all aspects of delivery as effective or very effective - a positive outcome well in excess of the 70 per cent threshold performance indicator set by the Teaching Agency. Candidates on GEP and UEP pathways are offered support from the employability services of Anglia Ruskin University, who provide support for developing CVs and drop-in sessions for candidates seeking employment on completion of the programme. Candidates interviewed confirmed that they were aware of the support that was available to them; however, the team was not able to talk to any candidates who had yet taken advantage of this service, so was unable to confirm its effectiveness.

9   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets nearly all of the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the management of EYPS candidate outcomes.

2   Approach to quality improvement

10   Systems and processes for action planning are robust and executed consistently by both delivery partners. The Prime Organisation requires delivery partners to develop action plans to deal with under-recruitment. The Prime Organisation has produced action plans with delivery partners to support the implementation of EYPS standards for the January 2013 recruitment round. The Prime Organisation's Action and Incident Log acts as the master action plan for EYPS activity and is used in developing action plans.

11   Extensive and regular training opportunities on all aspect of the EYPS programme are offered to staff. Delivery partners and mentors met by the team confirmed that extensive training was provided for staff, in line with the roles and responsibilities of partners outlined by the Prime Organisation Schedule. In particular, the team noted the extensive safeguarding training provided by the Prime Organisation for assessors and mentors.

12   Prime Organisation forums are in the early stages of development and have not taken place regularly. The Prime Organisation confirmed that a recent meeting had taken place and that plans were in place to work with another Prime Organisation, Best Practice Network, in arranging future forums. The Prime Organisations were monitoring a LinkedIn group called the 'EYPS Prime Organisation Forum', however Prime Organisation staff acknowledged that there was little activity on the forum and they had so far not made any significant contribution to it.

13   Systems and processes for obtaining candidate feedback on all aspects of the EYPS programme are effective across delivery partners. One of the delivery partners, Edge Hill University, has implemented an approach to obtaining feedback that includes candidate forums. The team idenfited as a **strength** the candidate forums in operation at Edge Hill University, which are a useful vehicle for gathering candidate feedback and which are worthy of dissemination and consideration across the partnership. The Prime Organisation is also investigating the possibility of establishing a social media discussion forum for all pathways, and Anglia Ruskin University and the University of East London have appointed candidate

representatives for each pathway. The audit team was reassured by candidates that they have the opportunity to provide feedback on all aspects of their EYPS experiences.

14   Candidate concerns are logged on the Action and Incident Log and are seen to be responded to appropriately. For example, the Prime Organisation logged the candidate concern regarding the Development Review on the Action and Incident Log and changed the training for assessors to reflect the concern raised by candidates. The audit team was presented with the audit trail to show how candidate evaluations had been acted upon and practice changed as a result.

15   Systems and processes for employers and placement providers to feed back are informally applied across the partnership. The audit team found that informal feedback is gained through a range of engagement activity with employers, local authorities and other stakeholders, but this is not a formal mechanism for gaining feedback and does not capture quantitative data linked to the placement experience of candidates. In a meeting with a placement provider, the audit team was informed that the placement provider would like to meet with other placement providers to gain feedback on their experiences. The University of East London (UEL) produces a Setting Information Pack for the GEP pathway, the focus of which is on UEL gaining feedback from its candidates; however, there is limited information on how the employer can feed back formally on their experiences. This approach to working with placement providers is mirrored by Anglia Ruskin University in its Placement Guidance document, which makes no mention of how the placement provider can provide feedback on their experience. The team agree with the Prime Organisation's own assessment that current processes could be strengthened further. The team therefore recommends that it would be **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to formalise systems and processes for obtaining feedback from placement providers and employers.

16   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to quality improvement.

3   Approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children

17   Safeguarding policies are up to date, fit for purpose and implemented. EYPS introduction days, induction sessions and teaching materials all address safeguarding, especially in relation to placement experience. Specific safeguarding training materials are available to candidates following GEP and UEP pathways, with signposting to relevant local authority-level training included.

18   All staff, including staff contracted specifically to work on aspects of the EYPS programmes, are familiar with the child protection policy of the Prime Organisation. Consultants, assessors and mentors all undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, and these are monitored by the Prime Organisation. Assessor guidance regarding safeguarding is clear and well set out in the Assessor Handbook. All assessors are given clear guidance regarding safeguarding procedures, including the requirement to carry photographic identification and CRB checks with them at all times. A phone number is provided for assessors that enables them to contact the Prime Organisation's EYPS Team directly for support with any incidents regarding safeguarding or concerns about the welfare of children that occur during the visit.

19   Candidates on GEP and UEP pathways are placed in appropriate settings for their placement experience. Checklists are utilised to ensure that any setting used for placements meets the Ofsted criteria of 'good' or 'outstanding', and has health and safety and equal opportunities policies in place and implemented. The procedures for candidates on

practitioner pathways are less rigourous, and candidates are encouraged to find their own placements for extended work experience visits.

20   Processes are in place for ensuring that all candidates have undergone an enhanced CRB check prior to undertaking a placement. All offers made to candidates across the partnership are conditional and candidates are made aware that this is subject to CRB clearance. The team recognises that there is a tension between the drive to recruit candidates up to the last possible opportunity and meet target numbers, and the aim to have all CRB checks completed before the programme starts. To help mitigate any risk, late applicant candidates are checked against List 99 and sign a disclaimer statement which enables them to begin the programme before the outcome of the CRB checks are in place. This applies to only a small number of candidates. In January 2012, 19 per cent of candidates began their programme without a CRB clearance, and in September 2012 this number fell slightly to 18 per cent. The team was satisfied that no candidate began placement before they had been cleared through an enhanced CRB check.

21   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children.

4   Approach to candidate support

22   Processes for candidate support are highly effective and applied consistently across the partnership. In conversations with candidates from all pathways, the team confirmed that a wide range of support was being provided to candidates.

23   Tutors and mentors provide candidates with extensive guidance on what they need to do to improve practice and assessments. This support is highly valued by candidates, who say it has enabled them to achieve their qualification. Mentors and tutors provide ongoing support to candidates through email exchanges, and this was confirmed to auditors in their interviews with candidates. Delivery partner representatives and mentors/placement providers all confirmed they were highly satisfied that candidates received effective levels of support to complete their programmes successfully. The support and feedback provided to candidates throughout their programmes assists them in understanding how to meet the EYPS standards. The team identified as a **strength** of the provision the support provided by mentors and tutors, which is highly valued by canidates and which contributes effectively to candidate outcomes.

24   The support for candidates provided by mentors is very good and the systems for managing mentors are effective. However, processes for the selection and appointment of mentors are under-developed and lack transparency. According to the Prime Organisation's self-evaluation, EYPS consultants are recruited from EYPS alumni and proactive Early Years Professional forum members. Stronger performing EYPS candidates are also encouraged to become mentors. The team could find no evidence of a formalised, transparent and open recruitment and selection policy for mentors. The process for recruitment and selection of mentors would benefit from further clarification and formalisation, and - in the interests of equality of opportunity - all successful candidates should be invited to apply to become mentors, with clear person specifications being drawn up and utilised to ensure appropriate recruitment. The audit team therefore recommends that it is **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to clarify and formalise the process for selection and appointment of mentors, including the criteria to be used, to enhance the transparency of the current systems and secure equality of opportunity.

25   Online information systems provide accurate, accessible and timely information and are updated at regular intervals. In reviewing the online information available to students

over a two-week period, the team saw evidence of a range of information provided to candidates which was relevant, easy to access and timely. All key documents related to the EYPS programme and candidate assessment were available on the site. Candidates assured the team that they had access to all the relevant online information they required and that it was helpful in assisting them to meet the EYPS standards and complete the course.

26   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to candidate support.

5   Approach to data management

27   MPowernet, the business unit within Anglia Ruskin University through which the EYPS programmes are managed, operates under an integrated management system in line with International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 27001:2005 and ISO 9001:2008. As such, there is a strong focus on compliance with customer and client expectations and information is held securely, in line with contractual data protection requirements. The team identified as a **strength** the systems for data tracking, handling and monitoring, which ensure that the Prime Organisation has access to timely management information and is able to respond effectively to the requirements of the Teaching Agency.

28   Anglia Ruskin University is responsible for managing the finances for the contract and for reporting to the Teaching Agency in relation to finance. The Prime Organisation maintains the Teaching Agency database appropriately, and responsibility for uploading data to the database rests with the EYPS Project Manager. Financial information, information on candidate profiles, and candidate outcomes are gathered monthly. Information about recruitment is collected weekly from the delivery partners, collated and uploaded. Appropriate back-up procedures have been put in place for uploading information should they be needed in the temporary absence of the Project Manager. Delivery partners do not have access to the facility to upload data directly to the Teaching Agency database.

29   Clear processes are in place for the monitoring and recording of staged payments for bursaries and for supply cover, and partners are clear about the agreed procedures for claiming these monies. Completed forms seen by the team clearly indicate where a candidate has withdrawn from the programme, and further payments are withheld appropriately. An online form is used to collect destination data and the team was assured by all staff that no candidate is able to claim certification without completing the destination data form.

30   The recent introduction of the online application system and cohort database has further strengthened the data management of the programmes, reducing an earlier reliance on paper-based systems and speeding up access to information. At the time of the visit, it was recognised that this system is still in a pilot phase and it is noted that a review of implementation is due to take place later in November.

31   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to data management.

6   Approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates

32   The Prime Organisation's parent company, MPowernet, has an overarching marketing strategy which makes reference to the EYPS programme. However, it lacks structure and has not achieved the intended results. There is no discreet marketing strategy

that enables the delivery partners to achieve the recruitment targets set by the Teaching Agency. Through meetings with delivery partner representatives and Prime Organisation staff, and through reviewing the evidence, the audit team was confident that significant marketing activity was taking place across the partnership.

33   The Teaching Agency's key performance indicator for recruitment of 100 per cent has not been met, with 79 per cent recruited for the September 2012 intake, up from 70 per cent for January 2012 intake. The audit team notes that in relation to Black and Minority Ethnic candidates, 13 per cent were recruited for September 2012 entry, which is below the Teaching Agency target threshold of 17 per cent; and recruitment of male candidates has remained static at three per cent for the September 2012 intake, again not meeting the Teaching Agency target of nine per cent. The Prime Organisation staff and delivery partners met by the team recognise the challenges of meeting Teaching Agency targets. The team recommends that it is **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to enhance the current marketing strategy for the EYPS programme area with delivery partners to enable a more focused, coordinated approach, targeted at the Teaching Agency recruitment targets.

34   The team identified as a **strength** the highly effective systems for the selection of candidates that ensure effective recruitment onto appropriate pathways and which contribute significantly to high levels of successful achievement on the Graduate Practitioner Pathway. The roles and responsibilities of those involved in candidate selection are published by the Prime Organisation. All candidates are interviewed. Interviewers create a record of the outcome of the candidate interview, utilising a comprehensive application and interview checklist. The processes for interviewing candidates are highly effective and consistently implemented across all delivery partners. The success rates on the GPP are very high, at 100 per cent, but staff confirmed that entry onto this pathway was rigorously controlled, ensuring that only those with a very high likelihood of achievement were accepted. In meetings with delivery partner representatives and Prime Organisation representatives, the team was assured that the strong and consistent recruitment and selection processes in place are contributing significantly to the high success rates on the GPP. On the basis of the evidence available to it, the team concurred with this assessment.

35   Anglia Ruskin University has provided supporting materials for interviews that includes scoring guidance notes and an interview script, and delivery partners confirmed that they found this documentation useful. Delivery partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding selection and recruitment. The University of East London makes use of checklists to support selection decision-making. The guidance and support provided for those conducting interviews facilitates consistency of good practice across the partnership; the team found this to be a **feature of good practice** of the provision.

36   Candidates confirmed that they greatly valued the interview process in confirming their decision to undertake the EYPS programme. They also informed the team that their induction and interviews had been an important part of the process, ensuring they were pursuing an appropriate pathway. The recruitment and selection process ensured that candidates had clarity about the expectations of the EYPS programme and working in the early years sector. Candidate journeys are tracked through a data tracking sheet, which tracks progress through the EYPS programme.

37   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets nearly all of the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates.

7   Staff management and infrastructure

38   Formal communication channels include fortnightly newsletters, monthly monitoring meetings and weekly recruitment updates to discuss progress and disseminate information. Partners praised the responsiveness of the EYPS Team at Anglia Ruskin University, saying that they were always contactable via phone or email and that response times to queries raised were good. The newsletters are seen by partners as particularly valuable; they appreciate the fact that newsletters do not focus exclusively on EYPS procedural aspects but also introduce wider aspects of the early years sector, including policy changes and recent reports, which partners feed into their teaching materials. The team identified as a **strength** of the provision the extensive formal and informal communication mechanisms that support collaborative modes of working and which are highly valued by partners.

39   All tutors, mentors and assessors working on EYPS programmes undergo training prior to commencing work and are required to attend regular update training events to ensure that their understanding of assessment practice remains current. Both Edge Hill University and Anglia Ruskin University have well established EYPS provision, with mature systems that have been in place since before the award of this contract. They have been working closely to align their processes to benefit from combined best practice. The evolution of the Assessor Handbook 2012-13 is a good example of sharing practice from both partners to get the best possible outcome for this important resource.

40   The relationship between Anglia Ruskin University, Edge Hill University and the University of East London is new, and delivery partners stressed that the partnership, managed by Anglia Ruskin University, has worked very well. Delivery partners felt valued and treated with professional respect.

41   Anglia Ruskin University, as the Prime Organisation, has built capacity within the new team at the University of East London through a partnership approach to managing and delivering the EYPS pathways. Staff from UEL have worked alongside trainers, assessors and mentors provided by the Prime Organisation, and shadowed a cohort of January 2012 GPP candidates through assessment and training sessions. This support has enabled UEL to take over delivery of the four pathways from September 2012, however the Prime Organisiation has ensured the security of standards by retaining responsibility for the assessment of candidate outcomes.

42   The Prime Organisation has appropriate and effective systems in place to monitor how well delivery partners are meeting performance management and quality assurance requirements. Annual internal audits, undertaken with each delivery partner, focus on how well the partner is complying with the requirements of the integrated management system that form part of the contractual agreement and with the Teaching Agency's performance indicators. Internal audit documents are reviewed quarterly, and issues of concern or items of good practice are fed directly into the overarching MPowernet Action and Incident log and used to inform the individual monthly monitoring meetings.

43   Individual monthly meetings are the main forum for reviewing delivery partners' progress against the Teaching Agency performance indicators. A standardised pro forma is used to ensure that consistent information on aspects including marketing activities, recruitment, retention and destinations can be tracked and monitored month-on-month, and comparisons made across the partnership. Where delivery partners are not meeting the Teaching Agency performance indicators, such as some recruitment targets, it is clear that these form the basis of close monitoring through the monthly meetings. Staff from UEL have found the monthly meetings especially useful and supportive. The audit team was encouraged to see that the pro forma for monthly meetings has recently been adapted and

strengthened. Monthly monitoring reports since November 2012 now include a clear section for actions from the last report and an update on current status as the first point to address; there is a section inviting delivery partners to identify areas of good practice or opportunities to share practice; and the marketing update is now tabular, inviting a smarter, more focused approach where partners must identify pathways or target groups, rather than the older method where partners listed activities. The team welcomed this new development and felt that it had strengthened the existing procedures further.

44   The team considers that Anglia Ruskin University meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to staff management and infrastructure.

Action plan[3]

Anglia Ruskin University action plan relating to the Early Years Professional Status Audit November 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The audit team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Prime Organisation:						
• the guidance and support provided for those conducting interviews, which facilitates consistency of good practice across the partnership (paragraph 35)	Carry out a review of practice across the partnership following each recruitment round. Specifically arrange a conference call to focus on the most recent interview processes Good practice shared and improved recruitment practice	End of March 2013	Programme Lead Anglia Ruskin	Successful implementation of good practice across all delivery partners A coordinated and consistent approach to interviewing and recruitment further implemented and sustained	Contract Lead Anglia Ruskin	Review success of recruitment and effectiveness of any new practices following next recruitment round

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[3] The Prime Organisation 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 Teaching Agency.

Strengths	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The audit team identified the following areas of **strengths** within the Prime Organisation:						
• the highly effective systems for the selection of candidates that ensure effective recruitment onto appropriate pathways and which contribute significantly to high levels of successful achievement on the Graduate Practitioner Pathway (paragraph 34)	Monitor retention rates by pathway and continue staff development activities across the partnership to continue to share good practice	June 2013 Repeat in December 2013	Project Manager Anglia Ruskin	Good retention and completion rates on GPP	Contract Lead Anglia Ruskin	Measure against retention KPIs
• the extensive formal and informal communication mechanisms utilised that support collaborative modes of working and are valued by partners (paragraph 38)	Continue current practice and include: -more visits to delivery partners - add targeted conference calls across the partnership to focus on specific agenda aspects; for example interview process	Mid April 2013 End March 2013	Programme Lead Anglia Ruskin Project Manager Anglia Ruskin Delivery Partner programme leads	Successful implementation of good practice across all delivery partners Monthly telephone conference attendance Number of visits to/from partners increased to two	Contract lead Anglia Ruskin	Audit process, both Anglia Ruskin internal audit and delivery partner audits Partner audits scheduled for UEL - Spring 2013, EHU - Summer 2013

	Consistent good practice shared across all delivery partners			in any annual period		
• the support provided by mentors and tutors, which is valued highly by candidates and contributes effectively to successful candidate outcomes (paragraph 23)	Explore use of technologies to host opportunities to share practice with delivery teams across the partnership	End February 2013	IT Support manager Anglia Ruskin	Suitable technology sourced and planned, joint provision communication events scheduled	Programme Lead Anglia Ruskin	Internal audit to include specific review of communication across the delivery partnership
	Share planned agendas and minutes and key outcomes from key local delivery team updates across the wider partnership	End June 2013	Project Manager Anglia Ruskin	Records from shared provision will be used to monitor and evaluate progress

Monthly monitoring to be used as communication for this | Programme Lead Anglia Ruskin | |

• the candidate forums in operation at Edge Hill University, which are a useful vehicle for gathering candidate feedback and are worthy of further dissemination and consideration across the partnership (paragraph 13)	Targeted conference call to explore how we capture candidate voice across provision Collate the examples of good practice with the consensus on common features of best practice to improve models across delivery provision	End March 2013	Programme Lead Anglia Ruskin	Implemented new strategies and the good practice shared	Contract lead	Review of minutes and action plan, including any follow up actions from events to capture student voice
• the systems for data tracking, handling and monitoring, which ensure that the Prime Organisation has access to timely management information and is able to respond effectively to the requirements of the Teaching Agency (paragraph 27).	Review effectiveness of new database available across provision in terms of candidate tracking	End June 2013	Project Manager	The database will be signed off as effective. Any amendments deemed essential will be scheduled.	Quality Manager IT and SLA, Mpowernet, Anglia Ruskin	Review with delivery partners in August prior to next recruitment

Desirable Recommendations	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the Prime Organisation to:						
• formalise systems and processes for obtaining feedback from placement providers and employers (paragraph 15)	Targeted conference call across provision to formally agree common practice and timescale for implementation	End February 2013	Programme Leads across all delivery partners	Formal feedback process in place which feeds into quality assurance processes within Mpowernet, Anglia Ruskin University	Contract Lead	Include review of feedback within audit process both internal Anglia Ruskin and delivery partner audits
	Implementation of formal feedback process	End April 2013	Programme Leads across all delivery partners	Evaluations are adapted to capture placement providers and employer feedback. These are consistent across the partnership where appropriate Good practice continues to be shared and further implemented when necessary		

• clarify and formalise the process for selection and appointment of mentors, including the criteria to be used, to enhance the transparency of the current systems and secure equality of opportunity (paragraph 24)	Develop a clear person specification for mentors to be agreed across partnership with agreed recruitment process for mentors	End April 2013	Programme Leads across all delivery partners	Person Specification and recruitment process in place Assessor/ consultant guidance to be updated as appropriate.	Contract lead	Review of available pool of current and newly recruited consultants/ mentors.
• review, with its delivery partners, the process for responding to and monitoring external moderator reports to ensure that all issues raised and all responses are clearly articulated (paragraph 4)	Develop a formal process in agreement with delivery partners for following up on external moderation	End June 2013	Programme Leads across all delivery partners	Process formalised and agreed with schedules to implement post next moderation in August 2013 To be added to the External Moderation Guidance and shared across the partnership	Contract lead	Review of actions arising from moderation report and effectiveness of responses to these actions

• enhance the current marketing strategy for the EYPS programme area with delivery partners to enable a more focused, coordinated approach, targeted at the Teaching Agency recruitment targets (paragraph 33).	Formulate a working party from across delivery partnership to agree common marketing strategy building upon best practice across provision	End March 2013	Project Manager Anglia Ruskin	Establish working party and collaboratively agree a Marketing Strategy that is more focused and coordinated Implement and monitor success against Teaching Agency recruitment targets	Programme Lead	Review effectiveness of marketing following next round of recruitment

Annex 1: Candidate Statistics

January 2012 intake

	East (Anglia Ruskin University)	London (University of East London)	North West (Edge Hill University)	North East (Edge Hill University)	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	30	10	20	5	75	65	87%
UPP	19	0	17	3	55	39	71%
GEP	6	0	12	3	45	21	47%
UEP	0	0	14	0	25	14	56%
Total	55	10	63	11	200	139	70%

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - January 2012 intake

	Candidates from deprived areas	% of cohort	Black and Minority Ethnic candidates	% of cohort	Men into childcare	% of cohort
GPP	31	48%	7	11%	0	0%
UPP	18	46%	0	0%	0	0%
GEP	10	48%	3	14%	1	5%
UEP	11	79%	2	14%	1	7%

Retention and success - January 2012 intake

	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Deferred	Completed or due to complete	% retained	Assessed	Successful completion	% success
GPP	65	7	5	5	89%	5	4	80%
UPP	39	5	1	1	87%	n/a	n/a	n/a
GEP	21	2	0	0	90%	n/a	n/a	n/a
UEP	14	2	1	1	56%	n/a	n/a	n/a

September 2012 intake

	East (Anglia Ruskin University)	London (University of East London)	North West (Edge Hill University)	North East (Edge Hill University)	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
GPP	37	9	46	19	119	111	93%
UPP	30	7	31	0	95	68	72%
GEP	11	9	8	2	53	30	57%
UEP	7	10	37	0	68	54	79%
Total	**85**	**35**	**122**	**21**	**335**	**263**	**79%**

Recruitment to meet strategic priorities - September 2012 intake

	Candidates from deprived areas	% of cohort	Black and Minority Ethnic candidates	% of cohort	Men into childcare	% of cohort
GPP	55	50%	12	11%	3	3%
UPP	22	32%	3	4%	0	0%
GEP	14	47%	12	40%	2	7%
UEP	30	56%	8	56%	2	4%
Total	**121**	**54%**	**35**	**13%**	**7**	**3%**

Annex 2: 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 Early Years Professional Status Audit can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx.

Annex 3: 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 *Early Years Professional Status Audit: Handbook for Prime Organisations and delivery partners*: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx.

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

academic standards: The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

assessor: Person employed by the Prime Organisation or its partners to assess a candidate's competency against the EYPS standards.

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.

delivery partners: Any parties (as notified to and agreed by the Teaching Agency) that are required by the contractor to delivery any part of an EYPS contract.

Early Years Professional: A person who has achieved Early Years Professional Status. Early Years Professionals work across the diverse range of settings that make up the early years sector. They demonstrate excellent practice and leadership.

Early Years Professional Status (EYPS): A graduate-level professional accreditation for the early years workforce.

EYPS pathway: One of four packages of training, assessment and accreditation available for candidates to gain EYPS (as defined within the EYPS contract).

EYPS standards: The skills, knowledge and experience required to receive EYPS, as defined by the Secretary of State.

external moderator: The purpose of external moderation is to provide independent assurance that the quality and reliability of internal moderation and assessment is appropriate. The role of external moderator for EYPS is similar in nature, though not directly comparable, to that of external examiners used widely across higher education institutions.

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: 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*.

Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP): For people with a degree and limited experience of working with children from birth to five years of age, but who are looking to pursue a career working in early years. Normal duration 12 months; maximum duration two years.

Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP): For graduates currently working in the sector who require a small amount of learning or experience before they can demonstrate the EYPS standards. Normal duration six months; maximum duration nine months.

internal moderator: The Prime Organisation is responsible for carrying out internal moderation of all assessment outcomes. An internal moderator will:

- check that all judgements made during assessment are sound
- monitor the quality of assessment to ensure consistency and standards
- provide assurance that the standard and reliability of assessment is appropriate.

learning opportunities: The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

learning outcome: What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

mentor: A person employed by the contactor to provide a development expert/novice relationship which supports a candidate to become autonomous through dialogue and skilled questioning.

moderation: The process by which the contractor will review assessment outcomes and ensure the consistent application of processes defined by the Teaching Agency.

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

Prime Organisation: The training provider with a direct contract with the Teaching Agency to deliver EYPS from January 2012.

programme (of study): An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

quality: See **academic quality**.

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

setting: A childcare setting can be a nursery, crèche, pre-school, day-care centre, children's centre or the location of a childminder or nanny.

threshold academic standard: The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications **frameworks**. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code): Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for **academic standards** and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (**academic quality**).

Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP): For undergraduates completing a degree, for example in Early Childhood Studies. Normal duration 12 months; maximum duration two years.

Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP): For undergraduates currently working in the sector that require a small amount of learning or experience before they can demonstrate the EYPS standards. Normal duration six months; maximum duration nine months.

work placement: A sustained period of learning for candidates on EYPS pathways which takes place in a setting registered to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and enable opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and experience defined by the EYPS standards. A childcare setting can be a nursery, crèche, pre-school, day-care centre, children's centre or the location of a childminder or nanny.