



# University of Northampton

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

October 2012

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## Key findings about the University of Northampton

As a result of its Early Years Professional Status Audit carried out in October 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 **can be commended**.

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 **can be commended**.

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 development and use of an integrated virtual learning environment and e-portfolio, which enables good communications between candidates, tutors and assessors; self-tracking by candidates; and promotes reflective practice (paragraphs 24 and 28)
- the dedication of significant resources to a wide range of marketing approaches and the use of stakeholders - including the local authorities - to target strategic priorities for recruitment, which are having a positive impact on recruitment figures (paragraph 35).

## Strengths

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

- the extensive range of development activity made available to all staff associated with the provision (paragraphs 12-14)
- the Prime Organisation's responsiveness to communication from candidates and other stakeholders (paragraphs 18 and 39-41)
- the formation of the Steering Group, which ensures the views of key stakeholders are included within strategic planning (paragraph 42)
- the proactive steps taken by the Prime Organisation to gather feedback from candidates and other stakeholders (paragraphs 16-18).

## Recommendations

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

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

- implement the new internal moderation documentation and review its effectiveness (paragraph 3).

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

- include a wider range of stakeholders on the Steering Group (paragraph 43)
- ensure that all candidates on placements distant from the Prime Organisation have access to the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio (paragraph 25)
- complete the implementation of procedures for the analysis of candidate destinations (paragraph 7).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) Audit<sup>1</sup> conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Northampton (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 the 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 Peter Hymans, Mrs Rebecca Lawton 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*.<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the audit included:

- self-evaluation prepared by the Prime Organisation
- minutes of meetings
- statistical information
- review reports
- candidate portfolios
- meetings with staff
- meetings with candidates
- meetings with employers and local authority officers.

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](#).

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/EYPS.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/EYPS-handbook-prime-organisations.aspx)

The University of Northampton (the University) is a higher education establishment situated in the heart of England. It offers a range of courses, including Foundation Degrees, Higher National Diplomas, undergraduate degrees, and postgraduate and professional qualifications.

The EYPS programme is run within the School of Education of the University of Northampton, at its Park Campus. The Prime Organisation was part of the EYPS pilot in 2007 and has been delivering all four pathways since then. The University ran pilots for the integration of EYPS with the Early Childhood Studies BA; NVQ to EYPS in three years; and the Early Years Student Associate Scheme.

The University provides the programme at a number of locations within the East Midlands region, including Nottingham, Lincoln, Loughborough and Leicester, as well as the Park Campus of the University. These locations are usually within an education establishment such as a further education college or children's centre.

At the time of the audit, the Prime Organisation provided the following pathways:

- Graduate Practitioner Pathway (GPP) in Northampton and Grantham
- Undergraduate Practitioner Pathway (UPP) in Northampton, Nottingham and Leicester
- Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP) in Northampton (and one day per week in Loughborough)
- Undergraduate Entry Pathway (UEP) in Northampton.

Statistical data relating to these pathways can be found in [Annex 1](#).

## The Prime Organisation's stated responsibilities

The University of Northampton is the main provider for EYPS for the East Midlands region and delivers the programme on its own rather than through a consortium. The programme is fully embedded in the academic quality and recording systems of the University, with the addition of some parallel systems, where required, to meet Teaching Agency contract and monitoring requirements.

The strategic direction for the EYPS programme is provided by the Project Director, supported by monthly EYPS Project Team meetings.

The responsibilities of the Prime Organisation regarding the standards and quality of the EYPS education it provides are as set out in the *Handbook for Early Years Professional Status Prime Organisations and their delivery partners* (Teaching Agency, April 2012). The Prime Organisation sees its responsibilities within this framework as being to:

- market the programme effectively in order to meet overall recruitment targets, while reaching out to disadvantaged settings, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) candidates, and men
- provide efficient recruitment and admissions services that ensure that only those who meet all of the eligibility criteria are allowed on to the relevant pathway
- provide high-quality education and training opportunities that are directly linked to achieving the EYPS standards, and develop candidates academically and professionally
- deliver and moderate rigorous assessment in line with Teaching Agency guidance through appropriately trained and qualified assessors and effective candidate preparation

- promote the safeguarding of children's welfare at all levels
- manage resources efficiently and be accountable for the expenditure of public money
- be open and transparent in monitoring and evaluating processes and outcomes against performance indicators, making use of data to improve systems, and providing reports and action plans to the Teaching Agency and QAA on request.

## Detailed findings about the University of Northampton

### 1 Management of EYPS candidate outcomes

1 The Prime Organisation's systems and processes for the appointment of the External Moderator are rigorous and fit for purpose. The Prime Organisation has followed the University policy on the appointment of external examiners and the guidance provided in the *Handbook for Early Years Professional Status Prime Organisations and their delivery partners* (Teaching Agency, April 2012). The External Moderator appointed has suitable qualifications and experience, and the appointment was approved by the School of Education's Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee (QSEC).

2 The External Moderator carries out moderation activity on a termly basis. The Project Team consider the interim reports, with the annual report being also subject to the University's procedures for external examining. The annual report is received by the Programme Director and is considered by both the Project Team and QSEC. The formal response to the External Moderator's annual report is written by the Project Team and monitored by the Associate Dean and by QSEC. To ensure timely actions in response to the first report, the Project Team has already addressed one of the issues raised by the External Moderator in advance of the formal response. Staff stated that both the External Moderator's annual report and the response to it will be uploaded to the University website.

3 The quality of assessment, moderation and outcomes meets performance management criteria. Comments from the External Moderator were positive in relation to the internal moderation of the EYPS programme. Assessors were positive in relation to the training and support they were given during the assessment and moderation process. However, the team found that there was some variable practice in relation to the internal moderation process. The student portfolios and moderation documentation supplied at the audit visit showed some inconsistency in completion of documentation. The programme team explained this as being due to changes in documentation received from the Teaching Agency at a late stage and information having to be transferred between documents, resulting in some forms lacking important information. New internal moderation forms have recently been received from the Teaching Agency. The team recommends that it is **advisable** for the Programme Team to implement the new internal moderation documentation and review its effectiveness: they should utilise these forms at the next moderation event, and review the effectiveness of the documents and the rigour of their completion.

4 Candidates respond positively to the conduct of the assessment process. Data obtained from a candidate survey indicated that, for all but one of the assessment criteria, over 80 per cent of the candidates rated the systems and processes as good or better. Candidates met by the team were very positive about their assessment experience, including the opportunities given by the use of scenarios to demonstrate achievement of the performance criteria.

5 The candidate survey conducted by the Prime Organisation indicated that 95 per cent of those who responded agreed that the programme had been effective and useful in their professional development and practice. This was confirmed by candidates met by the team.

6 For candidates from the January 2012 entry, all pathways exceeded the retention criteria; for the GPP the success rate is 100 per cent, with all completing candidates having met the performance criteria.



7 The tracking of EYPS candidates who have completed the programme is being developed. Destination data is sought on completion of the programme and after six months. At the time of the visit, only a small number of returns had been received but most reported that there had been no change in their role. However, the feedback indicated that there had been a significant impact on their setting; this was confirmed by placement providers and local authority officers at meetings with the team. The team recommends that it is **desirable** that the Prime Organisation complete the implementation of procedures for the analysis of candidate destinations, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the EYPS programme.

8 Appropriate careers information and guidance is provided to candidates on the EYPS programme, including a workshop on social enterprise for the UEP and GEP candidates. Candidates present at the visit confirmed that they had received suitable careers information and guidance.

9 The team considers that the University of Northampton meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to EYPS candidate outcomes.

## 2 Approach to quality improvement

10 Action planning is an integral part of the Programme Team's approach and appropriate processes are in place to promote improvement. Actions are identified at Programme Team meetings and followed up at the next meeting. A traffic light system has been introduced to the programme, which has helped the Prime Organisation to identify key issues and generate specific action plans to address them. In the last academic session, detailed action plans were generated for marketing and for the changes to the EYPS standards.

The 2011-12 annual reviews of the GEP and the field within which the other EYPS pathways are located were not available at the time of the visit, but staff stated that action planning was a feature of the process. Staff reported that, although in accordance with University procedures, the formal reports of annual reviews were not available until after the start of the next session, and that issues relating to the programme would be addressed appropriately by the Programme Team in a timely manner.

11 Training opportunities for EYPS staff are good. Core academic and administrative staff attended relevant training provided by the Children's Workforce Development Council/Teaching Agency, both leading up to and since the start of the programme in January 2012. Information was then cascaded to other members of the relevant team, who were unable to attend, via email/team discussions and at project group meetings.

12 Training has been provided to a core group of assessors and mentors to enable them to undertake the first round of assessments. All assessors were involved in the internal moderation event and used part of the day to debrief on issues surrounding the new assessment model and the use of the Laser learning and assessment system, and to update on future changes. Initial moderation of files was then undertaken in pairs as part of a learning and development exercise.

13 Staff are consistently supported by the Project Director and Dean of the School of Education to develop expertise and skills. Members of the team have attended an extensive range of training and professional development events over the year, which has had a positive impact on the EYPS programme. Continuing professional development events are made available to the assessors, who are not part of the core team. The audit team identified the extensive range of development activity made available to all staff associated with the provision as a strength.

14 Two tutors attended a Prime Organisation Forum meeting in May 2012 and made a significant contribution to the proceedings.

15 Candidate feedback is actively sought and used to inform planning. In addition to the University's module evaluation forms, the Programme Team has created a range of evaluation forms for all aspects of the programme, which will be implemented in the current session; these have yet to be completed and evaluated by the Programme Team. More informal mechanisms are also encouraged with the use of post-it notes and email. Candidate representatives also have regular meetings with the Assistant Dean of the School of Education as part of the University's student engagement process.

16 Systems and processes exist to allow placement settings to feed back on all elements of the programme. The Prime Organisation receives feedback from placement settings as part of its monitoring processes. The questions on the feedback form are appropriate and enable the Programme Team to evaluate the placement process. Previously, a different form had been used depending on the candidate's pathway, possibly causing some confusion for the placement provider, but a single form will be used in future.

17 Systems and processes exist to allow employers to feed back on all elements of the programme. Employer feedback is collected at the end of the programme in the same way as for placement settings. Feedback received so far indicates that nine out of ten of the criteria were rated 80 per cent good or better. Employers are also able to give feedback through their local authority advisors, who report this either directly or at Steering Group meetings. Employers stated that communications with the Prime Organisation were excellent. The team concluded that the proactive steps taken by the Prime Organisation to gather feedback from candidates and other stakeholders is a strength of the provision.

18 The team considers that the University of Northampton meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to quality improvement.

### **3 Approach to the safeguarding and welfare of children**

19 Policies for safeguarding are up to date and fit for purpose. Placements include detailed risk assessment portfolio submissions, and candidates complete safeguarding components on all pathways except for GPP, which does not carry academic credit. However a safeguarding audit tool has been developed for use with all candidates. Candidates have access to online and hard copy safeguarding materials throughout their courses, with specific contextual additions from placement providers. Candidates reported confidence in safeguarding knowledge. A wide range of training approaches, including role play simulation as well as traditional academic input, enables engagement with training materials in significant depth prior to placement. Assessor materials include sections on safeguarding which are appropriate and accurate in regard to the EYPS context.

20 The current Prime Organisation safeguarding policy states that candidates will be allowed to start placement in the absence of a completed Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check only if they have a 'Barred list' check, and as long as placement providers accept the checks. In practice, candidates in this situation have not begun placements, and have instead used the integral flexibility of placement timescales against study weeks in order to mediate the impact of CRB check delays.

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

## 4 Approach to candidate support

23 The Prime Organisation's approach to candidate support is commendable. A range of processes are in place to gather and analyse the views of candidates, placement settings and stakeholders, including local authority and children's centre staff.

24 Candidates reported that support systems are rigorous, communication is frequent, and that tutors and mentors are readily available for any arising issues. The online 'Laser' system is a particular strength, as it includes not only an e-portfolio that is tracked by a number of tutors and assessors, but also a functioning virtual learning environment system for distance candidates, and a network and update facility for mentors and placement providers. This software and usage policy has been specifically created by the University in conjunction with a commercial company for EYPS and is integral to the reported communication strengths. The strengths of the online system have been recognised by other institutions and comparable international providers. The development and use of an integrated virtual learning environment and e-portfolio - which enables good communications between candidates, tutors and assessors; self-tracking by candidates; and promotes reflective practice - is a feature of **good practice**.

25 Not all candidates on placements distant to the Prime Organisation and its delivery centres have full access to the 'Laser' system. The Prime Organisation is encouraged to complete its plan to roll out this opportunity to these candidates, and consequently the team recommends that it is desirable to ensure that candidates on placements distant from the Prime Organisation have access to the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio.

26 Mentor support quality had been raised by the Prime Organisation in its self-evaluation as an area for improvement. Policies now in place are addressing some of the weaker mentoring issues raised by candidates on prior programmes, although difficulties remain for some candidates with new placement providers and those at geographical distances. The weaker mentoring provision in these few cases has been met through a number of remedial strategies, although the impact of this has yet to be analysed. Settings which have Early Years Professionals as mentors are reported as being higher quality placements than those without Early Years Professionals, which is indicative of the positive impact of the course in the workforce.

27 Placement selection processes and policies are robust and meet all required compulsory elements. Significant data is being collected, including feedback from candidates, mentors, and assessors, although the analysis and impact of this data collection on future placement strategy is still at an early stage. The strategy for placements and selection is reviewed continually and improvements made in response to issues that arise throughout the process.

28 Candidates reported good understanding of the courses in all pathways, and cited the Laser e-portfolio package as instrumental in clarifying their understanding of the standards, and the collation and recording of evidence. Candidates who have gone through the Development Review are positive about its effectiveness and impact. Feedback from the Developmental Review appears to be formative and influential, although other feedback mechanisms are less well regarded. Some candidates reported more summative rather than developmental feedback systems.

29 The team considers that the University of Northampton meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to candidate support.

## 5 Approach to data management

30 The Prime Organisation's approach to data management meets expectations. The Administrator for the EYPS programme works with the Programme Director to ensure the collection and recording of all performance and financial data. The Programme Director has overall responsibility for the financial data of the programme and is supported by the Finance Officer for the School of Education. Data supplied to the team at the visit was accurate, with the exception of some candidate number information, and included an analysis of BME, men into childcare and recruitment from areas of disadvantage.

31 All candidate data, including allocations, recruitment, deferrals, withdrawals and candidate profiles, are recorded on the University's student information system and the Teaching Agency database. Weekly and monthly reporting to the Teaching Agency complies with contract deadlines.

32 The Prime Organisation states that it complies with Schedule 11 of the contract for services relating to delivery and training, assessment and accreditation of EYPS. It is also bound by the University's Data Protection Policy, which is in compliance with the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

33 The team considers that the University of Northampton meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to data management.

## 6 Approach to recruitment, selection and retention of candidates

34 The Prime Organisation's approach to recruitment, selection and retention is rigorous and meets all performance indicator requirements. Accurate records of enquiries, application requests, submitted applications, offers and acceptance data are recorded on the EYPS database at appropriate, timely intervals. Recorded information is accurate and accessible. Recruitment has not met the 100 per cent target, but is high. Strategic priority targets for disadvantage and male recruitment have not been met, despite extensive marketing and specific activity. Retention is high across all pathways.

35 The marketing and recruitment strategy of the Prime Organisation is strong. Local authority engagement in refining marketing strategy in order to specifically target disadvantaged and priority areas is a key factor in successful projects to date. Appropriate steps to attract applicants across the large geographical region are made through a wide-reaching marketing programme throughout the year. The team identified as **good practice** the dedication of significant resources to a wide range of marketing approaches, and the use of stakeholders - including the local authorities - to target strategic priorities for recruitment, which are having a positive impact on recruitment figures.

36 Recruitment and retention information is timely and accurate, and organised through both University and EYPS-specific staff. Recruitment and selection processes result in applicants who have appropriate entry profiles, although a significant number are unable to join due to a lack of English and Maths qualifications. Continuing work with local authorities to provide 'catch-up' courses to meet this key recruitment need is having a positive impact. However, restrictions on equivalency courses are still impacting negatively on recruitment figures, as the majority of application withdrawals are candidates whose qualifications were rejected at a late stage of the application process.

37 Induction, needs analysis and action planning processes are personalised by pathway and according to student requirements. Candidates reported a particular strength in

the adaptability of routes to meet personal needs. Early induction information, both during marketing and the interview processes, enables candidates to have an informed view of EYPS and all possible pathways prior to starting the course. Interview tasks are rigorous in their investigation of candidates' knowledge of the sector and in ensuring candidates are on the correct pathway. Individual candidate journeys are tracked and monitored through the comprehensive online software developed specifically for EYPS. Links between recruitment, selection and retention are analysed and reviewed, although this process is still in its infancy, with trends that could inform future action plans only recently beginning to emerge.

38 The team considers that the University of Northampton meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to the recruitment, selection and retention of candidates.

## 7 Staff management and infrastructure

39 Internal communications processes to ensure the dissemination of information to project managers, pathway leaders, assessors, candidates and settings are commendable. Newsletters and information from the Teaching Agency, including other bulletins, are received by the Programme Administrator, who forwards them to the Programme Team and other stakeholders as appropriate. Staff confirmed that information is received in a timely manner. The Prime Organisation produces an Assessor and Mentor Bulletin, which is detailed and informative and provides excellent support to assessors and mentors external to the Prime Organisation. From September 2012, the Prime Organisation will be sending out bulletins for placement providers and work-based mentors.

40 Candidates, assessors/mentors, settings, and local authority officers all reported in meetings with the audit team that communication with the Programme Team was excellent. Response times for email are short and accessibility by telephone - whether to the Programme Director, the Administrator or to other programme staff - was described as very good, with a positive impact on all aspects of the programme. The team identified the Prime Organisation's responsiveness to communication from candidates and other stakeholders as a strength.

41 The Programme Team meets monthly, with formal minutes being kept; pathway teams also meet informally. Staff external to the Prime Organisation, such as assessors and mentors, have regular meetings at the University to update them on issues relating to the programme, for example internal moderation and assessment practice. The assessors and mentors value highly the manner in which the Prime Organisation communicates with them through these meetings and by other means.

42 As part of the Prime Organisation's commitment to stakeholder involvement, the Project Team is advised by termly Steering Group meetings, which are attended by local authority officers, and by an annual consultation with a group of large providers of nursery facilities. The Steering Group comprises members of the University and local authority officers. It is well attended by most local authority officers, but travel expense restrictions from their authorities mean that not all of them attend on each occasion. The Steering Group minutes show that all aspects of the programme are discussed, and it provides useful input into its strategic direction. The team identified as a strength of the provision the formation of the Steering Group, which ensures that the views of key stakeholders are included within strategic planning.

43 The team formed the opinion that the work of the Steering Group would be enhanced by the addition of employer representation, even though a separate Large Employers meeting has been held. It is therefore recommended as **desirable** that the Prime

Organisation include a wider range of stakeholders on the Steering Group.

44 The majority of the training takes place in the School of Education at the Park Campus of the University. The resources at the School of Education were rated as outstanding in the Ofsted report on Initial Teacher Education in May 2012. All other venues used are either established teaching venues or schools that have been subject to evaluation for suitability and risk assessed using the School of Education's processes. Candidates at remote locations can access electronic resources online. They can also access printed materials through the University library by phone, or by arrangement with a university library local to them. Access to resources is evaluated via module evaluations and consistently receives ratings of more than 80 per cent positive.

45 The team considers that the University of Northampton meets the Teaching Agency quality criteria for its approach to staff management and infrastructure.

## Action Plan

University of Northampton action plan relating to the Early Years Professional Status Audit October 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The audit team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Prime Organisation:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the development and use of an integrated virtual learning environment and e-portfolio, which enables good communications between candidates, tutors and assessors; self-tracking by candidates; and promotes reflective practice (paragraphs 24 and 28)</li> </ul>	Implement Laser version 2 for September cohort	December 2012	Senior Assessor with Laser Learning, Pathway leads and EYPS Administrator (BW)	>70% good/better evaluations from assessors and students	Project team meeting January 2013	Amend in light of results by February 2013
	Upload online lessons in relation to safeguarding and babies/toddlers	March 2013	Pathway leads	Audit of Laser by Senior Assessor confirms up-to-date and major learning gaps covered  >70% good/better evaluations from assessors and students	Project team	Rectify any problems highlighted as a result of the audit and evaluations by September 2013



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the dedication of significant resources to a wide range of marketing approaches, and the use of stakeholders - including the local authorities - to target strategic priorities for recruitment, which are having a positive impact on recruitment figures (paragraph 35)</li> </ul>	<p>Include use of social media and additional direct marketing</p>	January 2013	EYPS Administrator, School of Education Marketing Officer	Recruitment to target for January and September 2013 intakes	Project team meetings	Analyse outcomes by end of February 2013 (October 2013) and revise strategy in light of recruitment and evaluation outcomes
	<p>Introduce use of student ambassadors</p>	July 2013	Steering Group and UPP and GPP pathway leads	Meet targets for areas of disadvantage		
<p>The audit team identified the following areas of <b>strength</b> within the Prime Organisation:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extensive range of development activity made available to all staff associated with the provision (paragraphs 12-14)</li> </ul>	<p>Provide opportunities for debrief/update for assessors/mentors at every moderation event</p>	July 2013	Project Director and Senior Assessor	All assessors/mentors attend at least one update during academic year	Project team	Analyse attendance records and identify assessors who fail to attend and review status of Assessor
	<p>Enable core staff to attend at least one Continuing Professional Development (CPD) event</p>	July 2013	Project Director	All staff attend at least one; all relevant discipline areas covered	Project team	Audit CPD records and identify any staff or discipline areas not covered. Take action to rectify



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Prime Organisation's responsiveness to communication from candidates and other stakeholders (paragraphs 18 and 39-41)</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluate effectiveness and amend current evaluation forms</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p>Deputy Divisional Leader (quality)</p>	<p>Relevant information captured to meet changing requirements of Teaching Agency (TA) and University. &gt;80% good/better feedback from candidates/ stakeholders in relation to support from Prime Organisation</p>	<p>Project team</p>	<p>Analyse outcomes of evaluation and implement any necessary changes for September 2013</p>
	<p>Invite student representatives to comment on satisfaction/issues/ responsiveness termly</p>	<p>March 2013 and July 2013</p>	<p>Pathway leads</p>	<p>Student representatives' comments are logged, responded to within 2 weeks, and issues escalated to Field Board where necessary</p>	<p>Project team Field Board and/or Student Experience Committee</p>	<p>Analyse comments, identify areas for improvement and amend as necessary</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the formation of the Steering Group, which ensures the views of key stakeholders are included within strategic planning (paragraph 42)</li> </ul>	<p>Hold termly meetings with Local Authority (LA) representatives</p>	<p>October 2012, January 2013, April 2013, July 2013</p>	<p>EYPS administrator and Project Director  Pathway leads as invited</p>	<p>Attendance averages 3 LA representatives; minutes record both stakeholders' views and Prime Organisation action/response; marketing strategy in line with LA priorities</p>	<p>Steering group and project team</p>	<p>Analyse attendance, follow-up information to non-attenders</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proactive steps taken by the Prime Organisation to gather feedback from candidates and other stakeholders (paragraphs 16-18)</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluate effectiveness and amend current evaluation forms.</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p>EYPS Administrator, Deputy Divisional Leader (quality)</p>	<p>Relevant information captured to meet changing requirements of TA and University</p> <p>80% good/better feedback from candidates/ stakeholders in relation to support from Prime Organisation.</p>	<p>Project team and School of Education Student Experience Committee</p>	<p>Analysis undertaken of effectiveness of evaluations forms</p> <p>Implement any necessary changes</p>
<p><b>Advisable</b></p>	<p><b>Action to be taken</b></p>	<p><b>Target date</b></p>	<p><b>Action by</b></p>	<p><b>Success indicators</b></p>	<p><b>Reported to</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>
<p>The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the Prime Organisation to:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement the new internal moderation documentation and review its effectiveness (paragraph 3)</li> </ul>	<p>Customise and implement new TA forms</p> <p>Introduce to assessors and moderators at next moderation event</p>	<p>December 2012</p>	<p>Senior assessor moderators, assessors and external moderator</p>	<p>Moderation processes 80% or more positively evaluated by assessors and candidates</p> <p>Positive external moderator's report</p> <p>Audit of candidate documents to ensure all accurately completed</p>	<p>Project team, QSEC</p>	<p>Analyse formal feedback obtained after moderation, as well as external moderator's recommendations, and implement any suggested actions</p>

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the Prime Organisation to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include a wider range of stakeholders on the Steering Group (paragraph 43)</li> </ul>	<p>Have discussion with current steering group to consider ways to include a wider range of stakeholders</p> <p>Hold meeting with large private providers/national organisations and record their views about ways to include them in planning</p>	<p>Steering Group meeting: Jan 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p>	<p>Programme director and steering group</p> <p>Project team</p>	Views captured and strategies put in place to include wider range	Project team meeting	Seek formal and informal feedback from steering group in July 2013. In light of this, review new strategies and implement any further required changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all candidates on placements distant from the Prime Organisation have access to the virtual learning environment and e-portfolio (paragraph 25)</li> </ul>	<p>Enrol all GPP candidates on Laser by first preparation day</p> <p>Enrol all other candidates on Laser prior to their first placement</p>	<p>Jan 2013</p> <p>Nov 2012</p>	EYPS administrators and pathway leads	<p>80% or more satisfaction ratings by students for Laser</p> <p>No negative student Qualitative comments about access to virtual learning environment recorded on evaluation forms or by informal processes</p>	Project team, DL (Quality)	Analyse data from feedback forms and implement any required actions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete the implementation of procedures for the analysis of candidate destinations (paragraph 7)</li> </ul>	Send out candidate destination questionnaire immediately after, and 6 months after completion of assessment	March 2013 for January 2012 GPP cohort  July 2013 for January 2012 UPP, GEP and UEP cohorts  Jan 2013	EYPS Administrator    DDL (Quality)	Questionnaire distributed at appropriate time  Response rate >50%  Analysis completed in time for SEF	Project team meeting  QAA	Evaluation forms will be analysed within 3 months of send date and data used to provide required information for TA as well as to assess effectiveness of EYPS programme
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## Annex 1: Candidate statistics

### January 2012 intake

Location <sup>3</sup>	Northampton	Nottingham	Lincoln	Leicester	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
<b>GPP</b>	12	14	14	-	61	62*	98
<b>UPP</b>	32	9	-	13	66	54	82
<b>GEP</b>	18	-	-	-	27	18	67
<b>UEP</b>	16	-	-	-	16	16	100
<b>Total</b>	78	13	14	13	170	150*	87

\*Including two self-funded candidates not included in percentages.

### 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
<b>GPP</b>	16	27	6	10	-	-
<b>UPP</b>	14	26	4	7	-	-
<b>GEP</b>	-	-	8	44	-	-
<b>UEP</b>	-	-	-	-	2	13
<b>Total</b>	30	16	18	12	2	6

### Retention and success - January 2012 intake

	Enrolled	Withdrawn	Deferred	Completed or due to complete	% retained	Assessed	Successful completion	% success
<b>GPP</b>	62	7	0	55	89	55	55	100
<b>UPP</b>	54	2	0	52	96	-	-	-
<b>GEP</b>	18	0	1	18	100	-	-	-
<b>UEP</b>	16	0	1	16	100	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	150	9	2	141	94	55	55	100

<sup>3</sup> Place names refer to location of delivery and not to partner organisations. The University of Northampton carries out all programme delivery.

**September 2012 intake**

Location	Northampton	Grantham	Lincoln	Leicester	Teaching Agency allocation	Total	% of allocation achieved
<b>GPP</b>	30	31	-	-	65	61*	91
<b>UPP</b>	26	-	-	8	38	34	89
<b>GEP</b>	19	-	-	-	20	19	95
<b>UEP</b>	23	-	-	-	24	23	96
<b>Total</b>	98	31	0	8	147	137*	92

\*Including two self-funded candidates not included in percentage.

**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
<b>GPP</b>	10	17	4	7	1	5
<b>UPP</b>	2	6	1	3	-	-
<b>GEP</b>	-	-	5	26	-	-
<b>UEP</b>	-	-	1	4	-	-
<b>Total</b>	12	9	11	8	1	2

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

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