



# City of London Academy

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

May 2013

## Key findings about City of London Academy

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in May 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of Pearson Edexcel and the University of the West of England, Bristol.

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

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

## Good practice

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

- the thorough and comprehensive arrangements to prepare students for learning (paragraph 2.8)
- the active consultation and communication with students to manage the change of premises (paragraphs 2.15 and 3.3).

## Recommendations

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

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

- refine committee practice to distinguish between strategic and operational matters (paragraph 1.3)
- review and embed systematic and rigorous annual monitoring (paragraphs 1.4 and 2.4)
- review the structure and content of the Quality Assurance Manual (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.5)
- formalise processes for programme development (paragraph 1.12).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at City of London Academy (the Academy) which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Pearson Edexcel and the University of the West of England, Bristol (the University). The Academy is also accredited with the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The Academy advised that at the time of review there were no students enrolled on Scottish Qualifications Authority programmes. The review was carried out by Mr Paul Chamberlain, Dr Martin Lockett and Dr Marie Wheatley (reviewers) and Ms AnnMarie Colbert (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included the self-evaluation document and supporting evidence supplied by the Academy, the student submission, meetings with staff and students, and the report arising from the REO conducted by QAA in June 2012.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- external examiner reports from the awarding organisation
- the specifications and regulations of the awarding organisation.

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

The Academy aims to be a quality provider of higher level education for discerning students from all walks of life and cultures. Founded in 2009, the Academy began trading in 2010 and now employs nine academic staff, five of whom have part-time contracts, and five administrative staff. The building occupies six floors of a building of 7,000 square feet in central London.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body and organisation. Student numbers are shown in brackets:

### **Pearson Edexcel**

- BTEC HND Diploma in Business (53)
- BTEC HND Diploma in Business Management (40)
- BTEC HND Diploma in Computing and Systems Development (24)
- BTEC Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (72)

### **University of the West of England, Bristol**

- BSc (Hons) Business Management (17)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The Academy states that curriculum design, development and approval are the responsibility of the awarding body and organisation. For Pearson Edexcel programmes, Academy responsibility includes quality review of higher education provision, response to annual monitoring and module evaluation, monitoring the quality of higher education teaching and learning, academic tutorial and academic guidance. The Academy is also responsible for setting assessments, marking and internal moderation.

The Academy states that responsibilities shared with the University include quality review of higher education, provision for developing staff teaching and assessing skills at higher education level and monitoring the quality of higher education teaching and learning. The Academy also specifies that responsibility for giving students feedback on their assignments, monitoring student admission, retention and completion are shared. Responsibility for the available library and learning resources and information about learning opportunities are also shared with the University.

Responsibility for selection, recruitment, induction and guidance to students for both Pearson Edexcel and University programmes rests with the Academy. The Academy also has responsibility for collecting and responding to student feedback and for higher education subject updating and scholarship for its staff.

## **Recent developments**

The arrangement between the Academy and the University is short-term and the formal academic agreement is in draft. The situation arises from the cessation of trading of the Management Development Partnership, a third party company with whom formal partnership agreements were originally made. Students will complete during 2013 and there will be no further recruitment.

The Academy plans to relocate to a self-contained building of similar size in London during 2013. Students are being consulted, their views ascertained and any specific support needs discussed to assist in minimising any potential for disruption.

The Academy offers a Pearson BTEC Higher National in Creative Media Production programme which has not yet recruited. Aspirations to recruit to the programme remain.

The Academy is also a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited centre, but to date it has not delivered any programmes.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The students produced a written submission with the guidance of the Academy which proved helpful to the team. Student representatives met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and a productive meeting took place during the review visit.

## Detailed findings about City of London Academy

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Academy performs its limited responsibility for the management of academic standards effectively. For Pearson Edexcel programmes, the awarding organisation is responsible for curriculum design, unit specification and assurance of academic standards. Responsibility for devising specific programmes from the available Pearson Edexcel units rests with the Academy as does programme delivery, assessment and internal monitoring. It operates internal verification of assessment subject to external moderation by Pearson Edexcel. For the University programme, responsibility for academic standards and summative assessment rests with the University.

1.2 The Academy has improved its system of academic governance since the last REO. Implementation of a wide-ranging action plan includes the formation of an Academic Board that reports through the Senior Management Team to the Board of Governance. Terms of reference delineate the committees' responsibilities. While some of the topics in management meetings overlap with those covered by Academic Board, the viewpoints taken in each committee are appropriate.

1.3 Most committees meet more frequently than specified in their terms of reference and have a predominantly operational focus. An annual schedule of work for committees is at an early stage of development and not formally documented. To ensure strategic issues and operational oversight are appropriately addressed it is **desirable** for the Academy to refine committee practice to distinguish between strategic and operational matters.

1.4 In response to the previous REO the Academy is developing more systematic and rigorous annual monitoring to enhance the management of academic standards. A pilot exercise implemented in advance of the next cycle draws together evidence from a wide range of qualitative and quantitative measures. The full provision of the Academy is included and a solid base of information provided. However, content is more descriptive than analytical. The pilot goes beyond the requirements of Pearson Edexcel and could form the basis of a more rigorous annual process. It is **desirable** that the Academy review and embed systematic and rigorous annual monitoring.

1.5 The Assessment Board plays a major role in monitoring and assuring academic standards and external members are included for the two main subject areas. Since the last REO the Board has met regularly to formally confirm assessment outcomes and follow-up on external verifier reports.

1.6 The Quality Assurance Manual draws together a range of academic quality processes and policies. Produced since the last REO, this is only available to staff and students in a printed version held on-site. While the Manual has started to become a source of reference some content is inappropriate for wide readership, in particular some confidential minutes. The structure and content of the Manual could be easier to navigate and a single version made readily available to staff, students and other stakeholders. It is **desirable** that the Academy review the structure and content of the Quality Assurance Manual.

1.7 The academic appeal process has been formalised since the last REO, making it more transparent and fairer. Appeals formally submitted by the student are reviewed by a

panel of senior staff and documented appropriately with reasons for the appeal outcome. Students are aware of this revised process. No formal documentation of consideration by the Assessment Board of the outcome of appeals was available at the visit.

1.8 The Academy has raised awareness of plagiarism since the last REO. The Student Handbook contains clear statements on the Academy's policy, as do programme handbooks and the Quality Assurance Manual. Actions include briefing of staff, raising students' awareness and a plan to implement an automated plagiarism detection tool from June 2013.

1.9 Information on student progression and achievement is effectively used within the Academy. Information is considered by the Assessment Board and the Academic Board. Samples of student work are scrutinised to ensure consistency of marking. Examples of action taken in considering student progression and achievement were provided to the team.

### **How effectively does the Academy make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?**

1.10 Pearson Edexcel is the primary external reference point used in the management of academic standards. The Academy increased staff awareness of academic standards and Pearson Edexcel through a programme of assessment briefings in 2013. Since the last REO staff show growing understanding of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and have been active in identifying its implications for the Academy.

1.11 The Academy demonstrates effective use of Pearson Edexcel reference points in the programmes it delivers. Assessment briefs are based on Pearson Edexcel specifications which reflect relevant learning outcomes and the assessment criteria provided by Pearson Edexcel. Since the last REO, assessments are rigorously internally verified.

1.12 There is no documented process for new programme development. The Pearson Edexcel BTEC Higher National in Creative Media Production offered by the Academy indicates consideration of Pearson Edexcel reference points. The planned duration implies more than full-time study and the credit values are not clearly identified. There is no evidence of formal internal consideration and approval of the chosen units which comprise the Academy's specific programme. It is **desirable** that the Academy formalises processes for programme development including appropriate formal approval points.

### **How does the Academy use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?**

1.13 The Academy emphasises the importance of relationships with its awarding body and organisations, including the external verification process. For Pearson Edexcel provision, the Director of Studies plays a pivotal role in linking external verifiers with programme teams, including internal verifiers. For the University, the Academy's role in assessment is limited to formative feedback. The Academy works with the University to make effective use of external assessment to assure academic standards.

1.14 Internal verification processes are consistent and rigorous. Academic standards are sound and criteria consistently applied. Pearson Edexcel external verifier reports confirm standards are appropriate and some reports commend the standard of work. Since the last REO the Academy introduced the external moderator role to provide an additional level of scrutiny to assessment. The role includes participation in Assessment Board and scrutiny of academic appeals. It is not possible to determine the impact of the role as it is not yet fully embedded.

1.15 Since the last REO the Academy has established a policy to respond promptly to external verifier reports. Assessment Boards consider reports and resulting action plans are completed within two months. Recommendations from external verifiers are consistently reviewed and action taken.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The Academy establishes effective communication to meet its contractual responsibilities for the management of learning opportunities through its relationship with the awarding body and organisation. For Pearson Edexcel programmes a comprehensive approach to ensuring students are appropriately supported is evident from external examiner reports, samples of student assessed work, internal staff development activities, Board minutes and meetings with staff. For the BSc (Hons) Business Management programme, staff work efficiently with colleagues from the University to ensure effective support for students following termination of the agreement with Management Development Partnership.

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

2.2 The Academy is guided by the Quality Code and the external reference points provided by the awarding organisation. Staff attend Edexcel briefing sessions held externally and internally, including those with a focus on assessment. With the support of an external consultant the Academy has recently begun a phased staff development programme to consider features of the Quality Code and to take an overview of subject benchmark statements. Meetings with staff and minutes of Academic Board clearly illustrate ways in which this programme is already having a positive impact upon the approach to the provision and management of learning opportunities. Staff acknowledge that, although considerable progress has been made, future activity needs to consider other areas, for example careers advice and disabled students.

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

2.3 The deliberative processes through which the Academy assures itself of the quality of learning and teaching have been effectively modified in response to recommendations from the previous REO. An appropriate management structure is established which has the capacity to ensure that the quality of learning and teaching is maintained. This functions through the recently established Academic Board, which operates in parallel with programme team meetings and the Senior Management Group. The new structures provide greater opportunities for transparency and effective monitoring of learning opportunities. Staff acknowledge that scope exists to further clarify the role and function of committees, in particular to achieve effective analysis, monitoring and enhancement of the learning and teaching environment.

2.4 In response to the previous REO the Academy acknowledges the need for more systematic and rigorous annual monitoring. The Academy is strengthening the scope of its

annual monitoring to ensure a more robust overview of the effective provision of learning opportunities. The form of that overview is evidenced in the pilot exercise. Staff are aware that by extending the scope of monitoring beyond that required by Pearson Edexcel, they may more effectively evaluate the operation of teaching and learning. A recent planning exercise to further develop staff expertise in annual monitoring has provided helpful preparation for the next round of analysis. A recent senior management appointment has strengthened expertise and knowledge in relation to current practices in learning, teaching and assessment.

2.5 The recently revised Quality Assurance Manual seeks to identify and implement measures to improve services in teaching and learning and to enable comparison of the level of service with that of other providers. Although the Manual provides a large quantity of information, it does not clearly articulate the full extent of the teaching and learning policy or provide guidance for teaching staff in a well-ordered form.

2.6 The Academy provides a learner-centred strategy which embraces lectures, small class groups, seminars, workshops and case studies. Emphasis is placed on oral presentation skills. In support of materials provided by the awarding organisation the Academy provides customised programme and unit outlines and assessment briefs. Lecture notes and other learning materials are provided for students through the intranet. This recently enhanced facility is student friendly and provides learners with up-to-date detailed records of their academic achievement. Students spoke enthusiastically about ways in which they employ social media for interactive opportunities to share their learning experiences. A comprehensive social programme allows students to widen their exposure to English language and UK culture and to develop informal elements of the higher education experience.

2.7 A highly effective process for monitoring teaching has been sustained since the previous REO. A comprehensive questionnaire in which students provide feedback about tutor performance is administered regularly and consistently. Outcomes are analysed and used alongside the results of a rigorous and efficiently administered peer observation of teaching scheme to provide the background for annual staff review meetings. Analysis and examples of good practice are shared at programme team meetings.

### **How does the Academy assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.8 A robust and effectively monitored admissions system ensures that student information is carefully processed, recorded, analysed and tested at interview. Arrangements for induction are carefully planned, administered and monitored at senior management level. Students receive an informative induction pack with accessible materials introducing their programme, learning resources, staff contacts and pastoral support. The social programme complements the academic provision. A senior member of the administrative staff is employing a critique of her own experience as a mature student at a public sector higher education institution to enhance the induction process at the Academy. The thorough and comprehensive arrangements for the preparation for learning are an example of **good practice**.

2.9 Systems for the collection of student views are being further developed. Since the previous REO a Staff Student Consultative Committee has been introduced. Prospective student recruits have been identified and briefed and initial consultations are taking place.

2.10 Student attendance, progress and welfare are effectively monitored by administrative and tutorial staff. Advice and guidance on academic and pastoral matters are provided through an informal tutorial system. Students confirmed these arrangements to be



helpful and appropriate. A formal and well documented complaints procedure addresses issues of concern ranging from facilities management to tutor performance.

2.11 Study support on good academic practice, including avoiding plagiarism and effective referencing, is provided through a generic student handbook. The Academy provides students with essential information and guidance for each programme and module that they are studying in addition to the generic learning materials provided by the validating organisation.

### **How effectively does the Academy develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.12 In response to the previous REO an ambitious programme of staff development events has been undertaken during the past few months. This represents a fresh strategy with the potential to significantly enhance the quality of learning opportunities. Well attended activities supporting learning and teaching include approaches to assessment, interactive learning technologies and aspects of the Quality Code.

2.13 The Academy emphasises that students benefit from staff who combine teaching competence with first-hand business experience. Students are able to identify clear instances of where staff illustrate their teaching with direct examples from their professional work, for example in computer networking and accountancy. Staff are also able to articulate the importance of professional context to their work and to identify instances of recent scholarly activity, including postgraduate study in organisational behaviour, which have enhanced student learning.

### **How effectively does the Academy ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?**

2.14 The Academy provides an appropriate physical environment for learning and teaching. External examiners note the quality of the learning environment. Students value the teaching spaces and IT facilities. Although external examiners have noted limitations in the textbooks offered, students expressed satisfaction with the library resources available.

2.15 Meticulous planning, involving thorough consultation with staff and students, is underpinning the Academy's relocation arrangements. The considerable extent of student involvement is documented as are the comprehensive details provided to students regarding the teaching spaces and learning resources that will be available at the new campus. Students confirm the constructive approach of the Academy in involving them in the logistics of the move. In addition, a scheme to help mitigate any hardship or inconvenience caused by the relocation has been introduced. The active process of consultation and communication with students to manage the change of premises is an example of **good practice**.

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

### 3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 The Academy's website provides an appropriate range of publicly accessible information. This includes the prospectus which is available for download, timetables, costs, admission requirements, application procedures, and information about living in the area and studying at the Academy. This comprehensive and informative pre-arrival information contributes effectively to the robust admissions process.

3.2 Essential information about each programme is readily available on the Academy intranet for Pearson Edexcel students. This effectively addresses recommendations of the previous REO. Comprehensive programme handbooks contain relevant Pearson Edexcel unit specifications and information regarding plagiarism. Induction material, schemes of work and timetables are also included. A helpful Student Handbook, available on the intranet and in hard copy, includes robust information about the student experience at the Academy. Information about the student representative role, appeals, complaints, student welfare and clear guidance regarding plagiarism are also included. Programme specifications published by the Academy are given to students during induction. For students studying the BSc (Hons) Business Management, programme information is provided by the University.

3.3 Clear leaflets and marketing material are also provided by the Academy to support changes or new initiatives. Material to encourage students to participate as student representatives clearly sets out requirements. The comprehensive documentation to support students with the relocation to new premises is appreciated by students. Helpful information about the area includes history, practical issues related to local facilities and accommodation. The effective and active communication with students to manage the change of premises is **good practice**.

3.4 The information contained within the Quality Assurance Manual produced by the Academy would benefit from being made more readily accessible. The Lecturers' Manual given to all new lecturers at induction contains appropriate information about expectations for teaching practice and staff development.

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

3.5 The system for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information is robust and includes clear roles, responsibilities and appropriate processes. The effective policy and approval procedure have been developed in response to the previous REO. The policy states that the accuracy of academic content is verified continually and at least termly by the Academic Board. Responsibility for final approval rests with the Director of Operations. Responsibility for ensuring that contents of materials for publication meet the required standards is initially shared between the Director of Operations, the Dean and the Marketing Director. Version control is in use in response to the previous REO.

3.6 Progress in developing arrangements for publishing information is clear and staff understanding of the process evident. However, it is difficult to follow the audit trail for some changes. A discrepancy relating to the credit values for the Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Creative Media Production noted on the Academy website was acknowledged by the Academy as an error which had been corrected in the prospectus. The review team was satisfied this had taken place. Ensuring documentation relating to all decisions on public

information will permit a clear audit trail and provide guidance in the absence of any of the current team.

3.7 Students are not directly involved in ensuring accuracy and completeness of published information but they are consulted for feedback. Students are satisfied with amendments made to information published on the intranet in response to their suggestions. This demonstrates improvement in collection of student feedback about information in the previous REO.

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

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

City of London Academy action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight May 2013						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Academy:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the thorough and comprehensive arrangements to prepare students for learning (paragraph 2.8)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to enhance academic provisions with improved information at induction</p> <p>Analysis of information in terms of attendance, punctuality and result outcomes in addition to classroom observations</p>	November 2013	Director of Studies, Course Leader and Assistant Registrar	<p>Student results and overall statistics for future comparison purposes</p> <p>Overall level of student satisfaction higher than 80% in relation to the learning arrangements from student surveys</p>	Academic Board	<p>Academic Board, senior staff and staff student consultative minutes of meetings and summary report of student results</p> <p>Student survey forms on the Academy's academic provisions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the active consultation and communication with students to manage the change of premises</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the move using the same process</p> <p>Extend the good practice techniques</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p>	<p>Director of Studies, Course Leader, Assistant Registrar, Operations Director,</p>	<p>Student, student representatives and staff positive survey results the Academy aims to achieve overall</p>	<p>Academic Board, Board of Governance, Staff/Student Consultative Committee</p>	<p>Academic Board, Board of Governance, Staff/Student Consultative, Committee and</p>

<sup>3</sup> The Academy 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 Academy's awarding body and organisation.

(paragraphs 2.15 and 3.3).	of involving the students in Staff/Student Consultative Committee		Administrator, Marketing Director and student representatives	level of satisfaction to be higher than 80%		senior staff minutes of meetings
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the Academy to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>refine committee practice to distinguish between strategic and operational matters (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	<p>Establish senior management team to refine further the role, functions, frequency and focus of agendas of committees</p> <p>Strategic items to be written into the terms of reference, standing agenda items and annual plans of work of committees</p>	<p>October 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>Dean, Director of Studies, course leaders and Operations Director</p> <p>Dean, Director of Studies, Course Leader and Operations Director</p>	<p>Regular meetings for different boards, clear communications between boards and a clear summary of duties and responsibilities of different boards</p> <p>Agendas, annual plan of work, matching the agenda and the action plan of each Board</p>	<p>Academic Board, Board of Governance and Senior Management Committee</p> <p>Academic Board, Board of Governance and Senior Management Committee</p>	<p>Senior Management, Board of Governance meetings, agenda minutes and meeting calendar showing different meetings for strategic and operational matters</p> <p>Academic Board Meetings, agenda minutes, meeting calendar of Academic boards, Senior Management meeting and Board of Governance</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review and embed systematic and rigorous annual monitoring (paragraphs 1.4 and 2.4)</li> </ul>	<p>Review past practices, seeking external examples, consulting further the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)</p> <p>Compile 2012-13 Annual Monitoring Report</p>	December 2013	Operations Director, Director of Studies, Administrator and Course Leader	<p>Annual monitoring document</p> <p>Content of annual monitoring document less descriptive and more analytical</p> <p>80% students' satisfaction level</p>	Academic Board, Board of Governance	Content, structure and details of the Annual Monitoring Report and minutes of meetings
	<p>Prepare schedule of the activities required for the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report for 2013-14</p>	October 2013	Operations Director, Director of Studies, Administrator and Course Leader	<p>Timescale of checking the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report</p>	Academic Board and Board of Governance	Annual Monitoring 2012-13 document highlighting problematic areas, setting new targets and benchmarking
	<p>Brief and train staff on developments for all activity cited in this column</p>	December 2013	Operations Director, external advisers and Director of Studies	<p>Feedback from staff on the quality, value and usefulness of training through feedback forms and personal consultations</p>	Academic Board	Staff feedback forms and staff appraisal forms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the structure and content of the Quality Assurance Manual (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Review structure and content in order to make the Quality Assurance Manual easier to navigate</p>	August 2013	Director of Studies, Course Leader and Operations Manager	<p>80% staff and students' satisfaction levels</p>	Academic Board	Academic Board meeting minutes, analysis of student and staff feedback forms

	<p>Revise Quality Assurance Manual to articulate clearly the full extent of the teaching and learning policy and provide guidance for teaching staff in a well-ordered form</p> <p>Make a single version of new Quality Assurance Manual readily available to staff, students and other stakeholders</p>	<p>November 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>Director of Studies, Course Leader and Operations Manager</p> <p>Director of Studies, Course Leader, Operations Manager</p>	<p>80% staff and students' satisfaction levels</p> <p>80% staff and students' satisfaction levels</p>	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Teaching staff meeting minutes and Academic board meeting minutes</p> <p>Academic Board meeting minutes and revised Quality Assurance Manual</p> <p>Academic Board meeting minutes, Revised Quality Assurance Manual</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise processes for programme development (paragraph 1.12).</li> </ul>	<p>Review, strengthen (through use of Part A of the Quality Code: 'Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards') and document the process for new programme development; to include such themes</p>	<p>October 2013</p>	<p>Director of Studies, Course Leader and Administrator</p>	<p>Revised Programme specifications and Programme Handbook</p> <p>Use of student and staff feedback forms to determine level of satisfaction</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Programme specification, programme handbooks, Academic Board meetings minutes, analysis of staff and student feedback forms</p>

	<p>as proper account of planned duration and credit values</p> <p>Review and strengthen formal internal consideration by improving an approval process described in writing and included in the Quality Assurance Manual</p>	<p>November 2013</p>	<p>Director of Studies, Course Leader and Administrator</p>	<p>Addition of approval process in Quality Assurance Manual</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Introduction of new programmes of study</p> <p>Aim to achieve 80% staff and students' satisfaction levels</p>
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## 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 Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight).

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>4</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**framework for higher education qualifications** A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**quality** See **academic quality**.

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

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

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

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