



QAA

Outcomes from institutional audit

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland



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Summary

Consideration of the institutional audit reports published by November 2004 shows that, in general, institutions have responded appropriately to the introduction of *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ).

Features of good practice in the ways institutions have engaged with the FHEQ and have taken steps to embed consideration of matters relating to it in their quality assurance procedures are directly cited in three reports and mentioned positively in a further five reports. Recommendations are to be found in 16 reports. These reveal concerns about such aspects as the absence of generic level descriptors, associated marking criteria and common internal structures for describing and managing the standard of awards; inconsistent use of the FHEQ within programme specifications; insufficient embedding of the FHEQ in quality assurance procedures and documentation, and a corresponding lack of staff awareness of its requirements; and inadequate institutional oversight of the process of implementing, and continuing to ensure alignment with, the FHEQ. There are also some specific concerns relating to the location and title of individual programmes and awards.

It is clear that the introduction of the FHEQ has led to widespread reflection by institutions on their internal award structures. There is evidence that adjustments to internal structures have been made, where appropriate, and that many institutions have taken care to ensure, through their quality assurance procedures, that continuing consideration is given to the FHEQ principles. Work is still in progress in some institutions and there is some evidence that the business of ensuring alignment of taught postgraduate qualifications has posed particular challenges.

Several audit reports indicate that, by providing points of reference for setting and assessing academic standards, the FHEQ has increased the emphasis on learning outcomes and affected the development of institutional assessment policy and practice. In particular, it appears to have informed the development of consistent and clear criteria for the marking and grading of assessments, and increased the attention given to ensuring that assessment tasks match the learning outcomes and, ultimately, the qualifications sought. Many reports indicate that programme specifications are used to articulate the links between the FHEQ, learning outcomes and assessment. Taken as a whole, the audit reports suggest that the use of the FHEQ in programme specifications is well developed in many institutions, but would benefit from further attention in others.

It is apparent from the audit reports that many institutions have sought to ensure references to the FHEQ, and to consolidate staff understanding of its principles, by making its use a requirement in the key quality assurance processes. It is now widespread practice to include calibration against the FHEQ as part of the processes for approving new programmes and reviewing existing programmes, and to document its use as a requirement in the supporting procedures. Where audit teams have judged that the FHEQ is not sufficiently embedded in quality assurance processes and/or supporting documentation, this is the subject of comment and, in most cases, recommendation.

Preface

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

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

A feature of good practice in institutional audit is considered to be a process, a practice, or a way of handling matters which, in the context of the particular institution, is improving, or leading to the improvement of, the management of quality and/or academic standards, and learning and teaching. *Outcomes...* papers are intended to provide readers with pointers to where features of good practice relating to particular topics can be located in the published audit reports. Each *Outcomes...* paper therefore identifies the features of good practice in individual reports associated with the particular topic and their location in the main report. In the initial listing of features of good practice in paragraph 2, the first reference is to the numbered or bulleted lists of features of good practice at the end of each institutional audit report, the second to the relevant paragraphs in Section 2 of the Main report. Throughout the body of this paper references to features of good practice in the institutional audit reports give the institution's name and the paragraph number from Section 2 of the Main report.

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

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

Introduction and general overview

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

2 Institutional audit teams are asked to consider an institution's procedures for relating its programmes and awards to the appropriate level of the FHEQ, and specifically to use the discipline audit trails for more detailed information and evidence of practice. As a result, almost all of the audit reports explicitly mention the FHEQ in the context of the discipline audit trails, although in many cases the references are largely limited to confirmation by teams that the nature of the assessment and the standard of student achievement in the selected disciplines are appropriate to the titles of the awards and their location within the FHEQ.

Features of good practice and recommendations

3 Features of good practice in relation to the FHEQ are cited in three institutional audit reports. They reflect the extent to which the institutions concerned have taken steps to embed the FHEQ in their internal processes. They are:

- the University's engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, including the FHEQ, at institutional and local levels [University of Southampton, paragraphs 189 ii, 55]
- the ways in which the College has drawn carefully upon external reference points, including the FHEQ, in reviewing its practices, and the subsequent incorporation of these reference points into its standard quality assurance procedures [Trinity and All Saints College, paragraphs 147 iii, 45]
- the awareness displayed by staff of the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements [Wimbledon School of Art, paragraphs 239 i, 77, 81, 85, 86].

4 The number of features of good practice relating to the FHEQ needs to be put in the wider context of the larger number of reports which, while not explicitly identifying features of good practice, nonetheless draw attention to particular aspects of institutional approaches to the FHEQ that are worthy of positive note. These include:

- Middlesex University [paragraphs 141, 145]
- Norwich School of Art and Design [paragraph 53]
- Royal College of Music [paragraph 59]
- University College Chichester [paragraph 124]
- University of Sheffield [paragraph 65].

5 Recommendations for further action or development relating to the FHEQ are found in 16 audit reports. Of these, 13 recommendations are of an advisable nature and three recommend action that is considered to be desirable. The major themes emerging from the recommendations are explored below, paragraphs 10-26. However, all of the reports mention the FHEQ and the material used in this paper is

not restricted to that taken from the reports that contain formal features of good practice or recommendations.

The use of the Academic Infrastructure in institutional audit

6 The FHEQ was published in January 2001, as one of the components of the Academic Infrastructure developed by QAA (the others are the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*), subject benchmark statements and programme specifications). In broad terms, the FHEQ comprises three elements: an awards framework of five levels; qualifications descriptors that specify the outcomes that students should achieve, and the skills that they should demonstrate, to attain the main qualifications awarded at each level; and specific guidelines on implementation. The FHEQ has an implementation date - the start of the academic year 2003-04 - and institutions are expected to be able to demonstrate that students commencing their programmes of study after that date will gain, on successful completion, qualifications that are awarded in accordance with the FHEQ. In respect of three year undergraduate degrees, therefore, the expectation is that all qualifications awarded from summer 2005-06 onwards will be in accordance with the FHEQ. For one year master's degrees, the equivalent date is summer 2003-04.

7 The individual elements of the Academic Infrastructure are intended to complement each other. As a result, and as exemplified by the features of good practice listed in paragraph 3 above, it is sometimes difficult to separate comments about how institutions have approached the various elements and it may be inappropriate to consider these elements in isolation. This is particularly the case for the FHEQ, the use of which is most commonly evidenced in institutional audit through scrutiny of the programme specifications provided for the discipline audit trails. In some instances, audit report recommendations make reference to the FHEQ in the context of programme specifications or other external reference points, and in a limited number of cases, recommendations that allude to aspects of the FHEQ do not, in fact, recommend further action in relation to the FHEQ itself. This paper explores only those recommendations and comments that relate specifically (although not necessarily exclusively) to an institution's use of the FHEQ. An earlier paper in the *Outcomes...* series has addressed the use of programme specifications and a forthcoming paper will cover subject benchmark statements. There may, however, be some overlap in the material presented in this group of papers.

Themes

- 8 In the audit reports considered, the major themes relating to the FHEQ are:
- award structures and the location of awards within the FHEQ
 - the links between the FHEQ, learning outcomes and assessment
 - references to the FHEQ in programme specifications
 - the embedding of FHEQ considerations in quality assurance processes and related documentation
 - staff awareness of the FHEQ
 - institutional oversight of matters relating to the FHEQ.

Award structures and the location of awards within the FHEQ

9 Many audit reports comment on the care with which institutions have considered the FHEQ and indicate that its introduction has led to widespread reflection on internal award structures, with changes made, where appropriate, to ensure alignment. Examples of amendments that have been made to existing structures include the re-designation of qualifications, such as the ordinary degree, to reflect the achievement of positively defined outcomes; recalibration of awards that are postgraduate in time but not in level; and the clearer articulation of differences between award levels. Some audit reports indicate that the FHEQ has provided the context for a more widespread review of internal awards frameworks and the associated practices, especially at the postgraduate level. In several cases, reports note that such reviews have led to the development of new generic level descriptors for all awards. Only two audit reports found no clear evidence of institutional engagement with the FHEQ.

10 As indicated in paragraph 6 above, all of the audit reports published by November 2004 relate to audits that took place before or shortly after the formal implementation date for the FHEQ. As might be expected, therefore, many reports indicate that work is still in progress, or is still required, to ensure the alignment of existing institutional awards frameworks. In several cases, the outstanding work is of a general nature, relating to the absence of a common structure for describing and managing the standards of awards; the need to define exit points for Intermediate level awards; the need to give further attention to the concept of levels; and the need to develop generic level descriptors or ensure that internal qualifications descriptors and programme learning outcomes are consistent with the FHEQ. Where reports have identified that significant work is still required, they have made formal recommendations. They have also observed that insufficient development of level descriptors can make it difficult for an institution to demonstrate alignment with the FHEQ.

11 Some of the outstanding work identified by audit teams is more specific in nature. Several reports highlight areas that have been the subject of continuing internal debate, such as integrated masters' programmes and combined degrees; others draw attention to discrepancies or difficulties in respect of individual programmes or awards. It is worth noting that all of the latter have been identified by audit teams in the course of undertaking discipline audit trails, when they have had

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the opportunity to look in detail at selected programmes. In respect of undergraduate awards, the matters identified in relation to individual programmes include:

- the need to ensure that H level awards fully meet the relevant FHEQ qualifications descriptor
- the need to review the programme titles for programmes of study involving more than one discipline, in the context of the guidance in the FHEQ, to ensure that the titles represent accurately the balance of the components in both level and volume of study
- the need to take action in respect of certain certificate and diploma programmes that sit outside the FHEQ.

12 In respect of postgraduate awards, there are several clear trends in the matters identified in relation to individual programmes, suggesting that the process of ensuring alignment with the FHEQ is causing some challenges for institutions at the taught postgraduate level. The matters most commonly identified are:

- the need for further mapping of postgraduate awards to the FHEQ qualifications descriptors
- the need to ensure clear separation of H and M levels, particularly in respect of integrated masters' programmes
- the need to review and clarify the level of specified postgraduate certificate and diploma programmes.

13 In broad terms, therefore, the audit reports published by November 2004 suggest that there has been much activity and considerable progress in relation to the FHEQ, but that further work is required in some institutions to ensure full alignment.

The links between the FHEQ, learning outcomes and assessment

14 Several audit reports indicate that, by providing points of reference for setting and assessing academic standards, the FHEQ has increased the emphasis on learning outcomes and affected the development of institutional assessment policy and practice. In particular, it appears to have informed the development of consistent and clear criteria for the marking and grading of assessments, and increased the attention given to ensuring that assessment tasks match the learning outcomes and, ultimately, the qualifications sought. One institution's self-evaluation document described the impact of the FHEQ as '[fostering] an environment in which there is far greater explicitness in learning outcomes for each programme of study than has existed previously'. A report on a different institution explains how the FHEQ has been used to develop grade-related assessment criteria which reflect the qualifications descriptors; another institution is praised for 'its careful articulation of assessment tasks with demonstration of qualities identified in the FHEQ' [Middlesex University, 145]. A further report describes how the institution concerned has revalidated its academic regulations to align with FHEQ and to define student attainment in terms of learning outcomes.

15 In a limited number of cases, audit teams have perceived that insufficient attention has been paid to the links between the FHEQ, learning outcomes and assessment. One report notes that the promulgation of the FHEQ has brought about

a change in institutional practice, because previously courses and programmes had not been described in terms of their learning outcomes and expectations. While the report recognises the progress that has been made, the institution is advised to take this work further by developing, publishing and implementing clear criteria for the marking and grading of assignments: 'this will help to ensure that the standard of student achievement... will remain appropriate to the title of their awards and their location within the FHEQ'.

References to the FHEQ in programme specifications

16 In institutional audit, an institution's use of the FHEQ is most commonly evidenced through scrutiny of programme specifications. In almost all cases audit reports has found evidence that institutions have made appropriate use of the FHEQ when preparing their programme specifications and several teams have commented very favourably on the work that has been undertaken [University of Bradford, 58]. Many reports also indicate that programme specifications are used to articulate the links between the FHEQ, learning outcomes and assessment. In one institution, 'the articulation of... programme specifications with the FHEQ is demonstrated in an exemplary fashion, with the level and qualities which are defined in the FHEQ being used to enable individually negotiated outcomes to clearly be at levels which meet the needs of particular learners, especially those outcomes relating to graduate employability skills' [Middlesex University, 141]. In another institution, the effective use made of the FHEQ and other elements of the Academic Infrastructure has resulted in course documentation for students that 'gives very specific descriptions of outcomes, linked to the framework' [Wimbledon School of Art, 85].

17 In general, it appears that audit reports have been most confident about an institution's use of the FHEQ when there is explicit reference to it within programme specifications. However, reports have not normally found the absence of such reference to be problematic, providing that the use of the FHEQ is nonetheless implicit in the programme specification, for example through the clear articulation of progression between levels, or through the identification of exit points for Intermediate level awards. In a few instances, the extent of reference to the FHEQ has been judged to be insufficient and has thus been the subject of critical comment; in one case, for example it was suggested that 'fuller use of the FHEQ in describing award outcomes could increase the value of the programme specifications to the full range of intended audiences'.

18 The audit reports suggest that the (explicit or implicit) use of the FHEQ in programme specifications is more problematic when it is inconsistent across an institution, or does not follow the institution's requirements. In some cases, alignment with the FHEQ is not always made clear in programme specifications or there is considerable variation in the ways in which levels and learning outcomes are mapped to the FHEQ. One report draws attention to a claim in the institution's self-evaluation document that programme specifications were used to ensure that awards aligned with the FHEQ and that the institution had produced guidelines for their completion; in practice, however, the report found that FHEQ references in programme specifications were inconsistent or non-existent, suggesting that the institution's approach was not working as intended. In such cases, the reports suggest that it is

difficult for institutions to demonstrate that they are providing complete and accurate information for students about the standards of their awards.

19 In a limited number of audit reports, there is more specific criticism of programme specifications in relation to the FHEQ. One report observes that the institution's ability to use the FHEQ as a reference point for specifying academic standards is hindered because the programme specification template does not itself provide for inclusion of learning outcomes based on differentiated levels of progression. Another report found some evidence of programme specifications with incorrect descriptions of awards and outcomes. In a further case, a report comments that an institution's programme specifications require further development to make explicit the level of intended learning outcomes in relation to the FHEQ, rather than simply giving a threshold statement of alignment. Taken as a whole, therefore, the reports suggest that the use of the FHEQ in programme specifications is well developed in many institutions, but would benefit from further attention in others.

The embedding of FHEQ considerations in quality assurance processes and related documentation

20 It is apparent from the audit reports that many institutions have sought to ensure references to the FHEQ, and to consolidate staff understanding of its principles, by making its use a requirement in the key quality assurance processes. It is now widespread practice, for example, to include calibration against the FHEQ as part of the processes for approving new programmes and reviewing existing programmes, and to document its use as a requirement in the supporting procedures. One institution's self-evaluation document described the FHEQ as 'a significant recent influence on programme design and... validation and review processes'. A notable number of reports comment on the appropriate and diligent use of the FHEQ during programme approval and review. Some institutions use a standard form, or template, for new programme proposals which provides prompts to ensure that the FHEQ is considered, and in some cases external advisers are asked specifically to comment on FHEQ alignment. One report comments on the way in which the FHEQ qualifications descriptors are used 'to elucidate standards in the documentation supporting course approval and review'.

21 Many audit reports comment on the ways in which information about the FHEQ has been incorporated into institutional guidance on quality assurance. The most common approach appears to be inclusion of references in quality assurance and assessment handbooks, programme development guides, and equivalent documentation. In one institution, a Teaching Quality Handbook contains guidance on matching a proposed award to the FHEQ and has, in the view of the audit team, 'brought... clarity to the embedding of external points of reference within... internal structures and processes', ensuring that staff are 'conversant with the FHEQ'. Other institutions have produced additional documentation that relates specifically to the Academic Infrastructure: examples include 'Guidelines on the Implementation' of the FHEQ, provided for all staff and a staff briefing document covering all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. Some reports indicate that references to the FHEQ are explicit in other forms of institutional documentation, such as curriculum framework documents and academic regulations.

22 Where audit reports have found that the FHEQ is not sufficiently embedded in quality assurance processes and/or supporting documentation, this has been the subject of comment and, in most cases, recommendation. One report, while recognising the changes that an institution has made to specific awards in the light of the FHEQ, comments that 'in other respects the FHEQ appears to have had a limited role in programme approval arrangements (and) in internal periodic reviews'. Another report draws attention to the lack of explicit reference to the Academic Infrastructure in quality assurance guidance, making it difficult for the institution to ensure that external reference points are used consistently. One institution is advised to ensure that its internal codes of practice take full account of the Academic Infrastructure, including the FHEQ. Another report, noting that the institution has acknowledged that the FHEQ needs 'to be explicitly embedded in its approach to course development and review at all levels', suggests that work should therefore continue on the articulation of learning outcomes with the FHEQ level descriptors. In a similar vein, a further report comments favourably on an institution's use of the FHEQ in the approval and review of programmes, but suggests that more explicit cross-referencing to the FHEQ descriptors in institutional documentation might be helpful in the context of its plans for the development of Intermediate level awards.

23 Several audit reports mention that institutions have, in accordance with the expectations of the *Code of practice*, ascribed to their external examiners responsibility for confirming that the standards of awards are appropriate to external reference points, including the FHEQ. The practice of requiring specific comment from external examiners is not universal but, where it exists, it is normally given effect through the completion of a section of a standard external examiner report template. In a limited number of cases, reports have found that institutional arrangements in this area are not working effectively and have made recommendations as appropriate. One report observes that although the institution's template for external examiner reports requires specific reference to the FHEQ, the corresponding answers are sometimes very brief or even non-existent. The institution is advised that the provision of further guidance to its external examiners 'would strengthen the ability of the University to use the FHEQ as a reference point'. Very similar comments are made in another report. A further report indicates that there is some evidence that an institution's external examiners are not sufficiently familiar with the Academic Infrastructure to complete the relevant sections of the report template, but that the institution has not provided any additional guidance to help them fulfil their role. In this instance, the institution is asked to take action without delay to ensure the consistent operation of its external examining procedures, and also to 'monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of its procedures for addressing the Academic Infrastructure'.

Staff awareness of the FHEQ

24 The ways in which institutions have reflected on and sought to embed the FHEQ in their internal practices and procedures will clearly have a direct bearing on the extent of staff awareness and understanding of its various elements. A number of reports comment favourably on the knowledge of the FHEQ displayed in meetings with the audit teams, and on its systematic use within the institutions concerned. One report observes that staff understanding and ownership of the qualifications

descriptors have been 'clearly aided by effective and focused recent staff development sessions'. Conversely, where a similar level of knowledge appears to be lacking, this has attracted comment, with reports suggesting that the institutions concerned should continue to work to increase staff awareness of the FHEQ and its implications. In two cases, reports observe that knowledge appears to be variable and inconsistent despite the provision of relevant staff development and training opportunities. Another institution is encouraged to explore the ways in which the FHEQ might be used to increase understanding of levels of study. In a different vein, two reports, one on an awarding institution and the other on one of its collaborative partner institutions, note the apparently limited engagement with the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements by the partner, commenting that the FHEQ itself is apparently being confused with an external credit framework. In this case, the report on the awarding institution indicates that the latter carries a clear responsibility for addressing this matter, as part of its responsibility to ensure that quality and standards at its partner institutions are safeguarded appropriately.

Institutional oversight of matters relating to the FHEQ

25 Finally, it is implicit in many reports that, by giving careful initial consideration to the FHEQ and thereafter embedding references to its requirements within quality assurance documentation, institutions have taken steps to maintain appropriate oversight of the FHEQ and to ensure that their awards continue to be appropriately aligned. Several reports, however, imply that there is a need to strengthen institutional oversight in this area. In some cases, audit teams have drawn attention to the absence of arrangements for systematically comparing level descriptors produced by schools and faculties, or have been unable to identify the locus of responsibility for mapping awards against the FHEQ or checking that all provision is in alignment, or have suggested that an institution's proposed reliance on the periodic review process to confirm alignment is likely to prove insufficient. One report on an institution without degree-awarding powers notes that appropriate use has been made of the FHEQ in the institution's occasional validation and review events, and suggests that it should now consider how a more systematic consideration of the qualifications descriptors could contribute to the development of its own internal arrangements for quality management, as distinct from those of its awarding institution. Another report suggests that the institution concerned is not making best use of the indicators available to it: 'the processes of approval and periodic review, the use of programme specifications, and the information provided by external examiners do not appear to assure Senate that all of its awards and qualifications are set at levels which are aligned with the generic qualifications descriptors provided in the FHEQ... [This] assurance... would be strengthened by requiring that information is included in programme documentation to indicate how the implications of the FHEQ are met'.

26 As noted in paragraph 10 above, in two cases, audit teams found no clear evidence of institutional engagement with the FHEQ. Both of the institutions concerned were specialist institutions without their own degree-awarding powers.

Conclusions

27 It is clear from the institutional audit reports published by November 2004 that the introduction of the FHEQ has led to widespread reflection by institutions on their internal award structures. There is evidence that adjustments to internal structures have been made, where appropriate, and that many institutions have taken care to ensure, through their quality assurance procedures, that continuing consideration is given to the FHEQ principles. Work is still in progress in some institutions and there is some evidence that the business of ensuring alignment of postgraduate qualifications has posed particular challenges. In those cases where audit teams have indicated that further development is needed, the reasons would often appear to be the need to undertake further work on level descriptors, to clarify the status of some individual awards, to embed FHEQ considerations in quality assurance procedures and the related documentation, and to strengthen both staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and institutional oversight of its implementation.

Appendix 1 - The institutional audit reports

2002-03

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

2003-04

University of Bath, October 2003
University of Bradford, November 2003
University of Buckingham, November 2003
University of Essex, November 2003
University of Exeter, November 2003
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, November 2003
University of Sheffield, November 2003
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, December 2003
Royal Agricultural College, December 2003

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

Appendix 2 - Reports on specialist institutions

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 4 - Methodology

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

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

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

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

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