Outcomes from institutional audit

Institutions' support for widening participation and access to higher education

Summary

Widening participation has recently been defined as: 'extending and enhancing access to [higher education] experiences of people from so-called under-represented and diverse subject backgrounds, families, groups and communities and positively enabling such people to participate in and benefit from [higher education]'.

Institutions' policies and initiatives intended to widen participation and increase access to higher education are generally reported on where the institutions view them as an important part of their mission. It is noteworthy, therefore, that such policies and initiatives feature in more than 50 of the institutional audit reports published by November 2004. In the period covered, most institutions were in the process of developing and implementing existing strategies and policies for widening participation. In some cases this involved 'mainstreaming' widening participation by integrating it with, or linking it to, other strategies.

For some institutions, partnerships with local further education colleges play a key role in widening access within their regions. At discipline level there is evidence of successful local strategies to attract applications from groups currently under-represented in higher education. Several institutions were found to be rethinking programmes to take account of changing student intake.

The reports show that higher education institutions were meeting the challenge of widening access in a variety of ways. These ranged from initiatives to raise aspirations and increase participation involving the whole of the regional educational community, to local strategies aimed at countering the 'elite' image of individual schools or disciplines. Student retention was recognised as a further challenge to be met. This was being approached by extending strategies for widening participation to include a commitment to ensure that students recruited from disadvantaged backgrounds successfully complete their awards, or by developing separate policies for student retention.

An increasingly diverse student body has implications for the provision of learner support. Consequently, most institutions were seeking to meet the associated challenges by increasing investment in learning resources and providing higher levels of academic and personal support. The institutional audit reports provide several examples where initiatives originally developed to support and enhance the learning experience of students recruited through widening participation have been made available to all students. Hence in some cases the formation of student retention groups or task forces has had effects reaching beyond 'non-traditional' students to all undergraduates.

Features of good practice identified in the audit reports range from commitment to widening participation within institutions' regions, through measures to improve student retention, to the wide range of support provided for diverse communities of students. Recommendations for action are mainly confined to improvements in collecting, analysing and using data in the context of widening participation and student retention. Thus several reports draw attention to the need for detailed statistical information on admissions, progression and completion in order to drive initiatives for widening participation and inform measures for improving student retention.

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 in the same year. 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. Although all features of good practice are listed, in the interests of brevity not all are discussed in this paper. In the initial listing in paragraph 4, 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 is to the relevant paragraphs in Sections 2 and 3 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 those Sections 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, which are being published throughout 2005-06, can be found at Appendix 3 (page 16).

The 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. 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 QAA's website and cited, with acknowledgement.

Introduction and general overview

1   This paper is based on a detailed consideration of the 70 institutional audit reports published by 5 November 2004 (see Appendix 1, page 13). A note of the methodology used to produce this and other papers in the *Outcomes…* series can be found in Appendix 4 (page 17).

2   Widening participation has been defined as: 'extending and enhancing access to HE experiences of people from so-called under-represented and diverse subject backgrounds, families, groups and communities and positively enabling such people to participate in and benefit from HE' *(How to think about widening participation in UK higher education. Discussion paper for the Higher Education Funding Council for England* (HEFCE), David Watson, July 2006). Widening access and improving participation in higher education continue to form a strategic aim of HEFCE, but the value of costly initiatives has recently been questioned in a report commissioned and published by HEFCE: *Review of widening participation research: addressing the barriers to participation in higher education* (July 2006).

3   It should be noted that although there is no requirement on audit teams to report on institutional policies and initiatives intended to widen participation and increase access, 50 of the 70 reports make references to widening participation. These references are spread throughout the main part of the reports. Almost half can be found in the section on progression and completion statistics, more than a quarter under the institution's intentions for the enhancement of quality and standards, and about the same in the sections on personal support and guidance, collaborative provision, and academic guidance, support and supervision. The audit reports identify a substantial number of features of good practice relating to widening participation, either directly in their Findings, or by reference to paragraphs in the Main report. Of the 50 reports which address widening participation, about a fifth contain recommendations for action, more than half of which concern the collection, analysis and use of statistical data.

Features of good practice

4   Features of good practice identified in connection with widening participation include:

- the University's commitment to widening participation and to catering for the needs of a diverse student body [University of Bradford, paragraph 250 v; paragraphs 137 and 153]

- the efforts [consistent with its developing policy on widening participation] made by the College to realise its Mission in the local community [King's College London, paragraph 269 vi; paragraph 229]

- the commitment to the University's regional mission, which is widely shared across the institution [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 295; paragraphs 11, 129, 228, 231 and 238]

- the use of the Academic Infrastructure in the context of the College's widening participation strategy to provide structured opportunities for progression through the FE/HE continuum within the College's provision [Writtle College, paragraph 182 ii; paragraph 59]

- the measures taken to improve retention [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 295; paragraphs 108, 144 and 153]

- the use of progression and completion data to drive developments relating to widening participation and entrants from backgrounds with no tradition of HE [Bournemouth University, paragraph 89]

- the procedures in place for identifying, supporting and monitoring students at risk of not progressing or completing awards [Newman College of Higher Education, paragraph 210 iv; paragraph 130]

- the support for students provided by central services within the context of widening participation and diversity [Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, paragraph 210 ii; paragraphs 127, 136 and 143]

- the continuing development of a range of local and central student support services, notably the expansion of dedicated arrangements for assisting students to improve their mathematical and academic writing skills [Coventry University, paragraph 273 iii; paragraphs 129 and 135]

- the wide range of support provided for the different communities of students [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 295; paragraph 162]

- the development of drop-in centres to give support, for example, in mathematics, grammar and programming [Aston University, paragraph 253 ii; paragraph 114]

- the proactive stance [predicated on the diversity of the student body] taken by the University in giving guidance and support to students [Open University, paragraph 207 iv; paragraphs 110 and 118].

5   In the case of one institution with long experience of working with a widening participation agenda, the audit team elected to undertake a thematic enquiry entitled 'Meeting the Challenges of Widening Participation'. As a result of this enquiry, it was reported that the solutions generated and areas identified for future enhancement - following engagement with many of the challenges arising from the demands and needs of a diverse student population - might 'contain lessons for the higher education sector as a whole'. The audit team noted, in particular:

- the proactive way in which the University has worked with its regional educational partners and regional agencies to raise aspirations and facilitate entry into higher education

- the consistent approach to the articulation of university strategy, which effectively embeds [widening participation] initiatives into mainstream institutional activities

- the strong management of the students' learning experience and the careful coordination of support services in order to provide appropriate support for different communities of students

- the substantial investment in the learning infrastructure to support increasingly flexible modes of study

- the open, reflective and self-critical nature of the institution at all levels, which has contributed to meaningful debates with both staff and students about future [widening participation] priorities. [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 11; paragraphs 225 to 240].

Themes

6   A consideration of the features of good practice and recommendations in the audit reports under consideration that relate to widening participation suggests that the following broad themes merit further discussion:

- implementation of strategies and policies

- access and retention

- use of data

- support arrangements.

Implementation of strategies and policies

7   In the period covered by the first 70 reports, institutions were found to be in the process of developing and implementing existing strategies and policies for widening participation. In some cases, 'mainstreaming' of widening participation was reported to involve the integration or closer alignment of various strategies. For example, one institution was reported to be planning to integrate separate strategies for widening participation, disability and dyslexia support and race relations within an overall strategy for learning and teaching. Another stated its belief that the closer alignment of its learning and teaching strategy with its human resources and widening participation strategies would serve its enhancement agenda. For a third institution, the integration of strategies included developing a new widening participation strategy linked to quality assurance.

8   Several audit reports comment on the importance attached by institutions to partnerships with further education colleges in the successful implementation of strategies for widening participation. One institution had refocused its collaborative provision strategy on links with regional partners to support access and widening participation. Another is cited as having drawn attention in its self-evaluation document to the strategic nature of its relationship with its associate colleges in meeting regional needs by offering a wider range of higher education provision and promoting access and widening participation. In order to implement its 'Further and Higher Education Widening Participation Strategy', another institution was found to have entered into partnerships with a number of colleges for the full or partial delivery of its awards.

9   In several other audit reports, further education colleges are seen as key partners in higher education institutions' plans to widen participation in their regions through, for example, the development of foundation degrees and '2+2' programmes. One

audit report found that the working relationships between the institution and its further education college partners in the region were excellent. These relationships operated to obvious mutual benefit, with future developments planned in relation to the widening participation agenda.

10   A number of audit reports note that the development and implementation of local strategies for widening participation were being addressed through discipline audit trails. In one institution, for example, schools' learning and teaching development plans were expected to take account of the wider institutional strategy, which put particular emphasis on widening participation in its immediate objectives. In another institution, a school's widening participation strategy was found to have been successful in giving opportunities to groups currently under-represented in higher education, and to have attracted applicants from the local community. In yet another institution, one school's widening participation strategy, aimed at attracting applications from those who might otherwise have been deterred by its 'elite' image, seemed 'to be making good progress and to represent a development that deserved encouragement'. Again, another audit report found a school's initiatives for widening participation, including industry-supported scholarships for black and Asian students, worthy of particular note. In one report, however, it was noted that there appeared to be no formal encouragement to extend innovative approaches to widening participation at discipline level across the whole institution.

11   Although schools in one institution were required to report on action relating to widening participation, the audit report found little evidence of teaching, learning and assessment arrangements being developed with explicit reference to the widening participation strategy. To set alongside this, however, several audit reports describe institutions as rethinking programmes to take account of changing student intake, or developing curricula, teaching methods and student support in connection with their widening participation strategies. One audit report considered that establishing a curriculum development team represented an appropriate response to the intention to create an inclusive, flexible curriculum portfolio to meet the institution's regional widening participation objectives. In line with its mission, another institution aimed to develop teaching in the context of widening participation by means of new technologies, and had overseen extensive expansion and strategic investment in e-learning. In the case of several other institutions, audit reports recommended that proposals for new programmes should allow opportunity for, or give consideration to, widening access.

12   The arrangements for developing and implementing strategies and policies for widening participation described in the audit reports varied according to the size and nature of the institution. For example, one institution had recently established a Board for Widening Participation, chaired by its Vice-Chancellor, with specific responsibility to develop and oversee strategy in this area, including its interrelationship with teaching and assessment processes. Other reports make mention of widening participation strategy groups or advisory boards, in some cases with student representation. Some institutions had appointed staff with institution-wide responsibilities for widening participation, such as widening participation officers or coordinators. In others, the responsibility for coordinating the delivery of widening

participation strategies had been placed with centres for lifelong learning or education development units. One audit team noted that a widening participation office had an active presence on the institution's website. Through discipline audit trails, several audit reports were able to comment on schools' and departments' local arrangements for overseeing widening participation strategies, such as the appointment of schools liaison officers, widening participation coordinators or directors of student support.

Access and retention

13   The first 70 audit reports identify a range of features of good practice in relation to encouraging wider access to higher education. These include active engagement with schools and further education colleges in some relatively deprived parts of the local community by an institution which was reported to be by no means dependent on student recruitment from that community [Kings College London, paragraph 229]. The extensive wider access initiatives of another institution's mission committed it to providing for, and contributing to, its region through vocationally relevant programmes enabling and encouraging individuals to realise their full potential [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 225]. In the latter case, it was reported that the institution recognised raising aspirations and increasing participation from under-represented groups as a collective effort involving the whole of the regional educational community. As a result, major contributions were being made to numerous partnership-led projects in the region; the institution was working in collaboration with 15 partner colleges to provide opportunities for students to study close to home and to progress into higher education [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 228].

14   In view of its policy towards widening participation and not to mislead applicants, an institution where engagement with its associated further education colleges was identified as a feature of good practice was invited by the audit team to reflect on progression routes to its own degree programmes from its collaborative provision. Another audit report commented on a college's arrangements to offer progression opportunities from further to higher education programmes within its own provision, and how it had made use of the Academic Infrastructure to facilitate these opportunities, in the context of its widening participation strategy. The report viewed these particular arrangements as a feature of good practice [Writtle College, paragraphs 28 and 59].

15   Reports on the conduct of discipline audit trails provided several examples of local initiatives to widen the pool of applicants and admit students from backgrounds with no tradition of higher education. In this context, one audit report noted that widening participation activity was well supported by an undergraduate admissions manual for admissions tutors and officers, with guidance on procedures, roles, entry qualifications and other relevant information. Another audit report noted that the institution concerned had commissioned a report on the role of pre-entry guidance in widening participation. Nonetheless, the report also recommended that the institution should develop policies and procedures relating to all aspects of admissions, and ensure that they were uniformly adopted throughout the institution.

16   The particular challenge presented by student retention for institutions with a strong commitment to widening participation, and the diversity of student background and previous educational experience which such a policy actively encourages, is noted in several audit reports. In some institutions, a separate retention strategy, in addition to a widening participation strategy, was found to have been developed. One report noted that the expansion of a widening participation policy had resulted in the identification of student retention as a central institutional priority. This had led to the approval of a retention strategy and associated investment in resources. In another institution, the establishment of a student achievement and completion committee to develop and oversee the implementation of a strategy to support student achievement and improve course completion rates was noted. In yet another institution, a student retention group had been reconstituted to advise on developing a new student retention strategy.

17   One institution had carried out an audit of widening participation issues in the context of student progression, dealing particularly with the support and retention of 'non-traditional' students. In this case, the audit report considered that the coverage and conclusions of the resulting report reached beyond 'non-traditional students' to all undergraduates. In support of its commitment to widening participation, another institution had recently introduced faculty recruitment and retention coordinators whose initial role was to gather faculty good practice on tracking student progression.

18   One institution, in which measures to improve retention were identified as a feature of good practice, had extended a widening participation policy that focused on improving recruitment performance regarding ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, rural returnees and people from disadvantaged areas to include a commitment to ensuring that students recruited from such backgrounds successfully completed their awards. In this instance, a retention task force had been set up to address progression and completion issues. This had led in turn to a number of initiatives concerning student support, which also influenced policies on assessment. As a result, the number of students who were unable to progress because they had failed resit examinations had been almost halved in two years [University of Wolverhampton, paragraphs 108, 228 and 295].

Use of data

19   Several of the first 70 institutional audit reports draw attention to the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of widening participation strategies by collecting and analysing statistical information on admissions, progression and student retention. One describes how an institution was facing difficulties in routinely analysing data by categories such as entrance qualification, social background, ethnicity or geographical origin, when this information would be valuable for monitoring and informing its widening participation agenda. Another report notes an institution's concern - consonant with its policy on widening participation - to improve its ability to enable student achievement, as evidenced by retention rates. The report endorsed the institution's intention to address the deficiencies in data production which were inhibiting its capacity to monitor progress.

20   One audit report's recommendation that the institution should consider how it might produce more detailed admissions data and analyses of trends, to monitor diversity and widen participation, was supported by reports on discipline audit trails. These found that the provision of more finely detailed admissions, progression and completion information would enable the institution and its schools to judge whether their intentions for widening participation were succeeding. Several other audit reports were able to note the success of the relevant institutions in widening participation, as shown by HEFCE performance indicators. At the same time, they found it difficult to be clear how data currently collected could readily be used to inform admissions policies or initiatives relating to widening participation, as it did not permit the tracking of particular student groups.

21   The effective use of statistical information is noted in several reports. Examples include:

- evidence of attention given to issues of widening participation and completion in the production of data at both central and local levels

- the production of an annual report on the progression and completion of widening participation students, to enable policy and practice to be informed by statistical evidence

- the analysis of centrally produced progression and completion data, to drive initiatives for widening participation at discipline level

- detailed annual analysis of student progression against HEFCE benchmarks.

An examination of statistical information had enabled one institution to demonstrate pleasingly high rates of student progression and completion, and monitor progress towards expanding participation and widening access to its undergraduate programmes. The same report confirmed the institution's success in recruiting growing numbers of students from social and educational backgrounds which historically have been under-represented in higher education. In another institution, the remit of a working group set up to consider the issue of producing widening participation data, to help in achieving the widening participation strategy, had been broadened to develop a more comprehensive, corporate approach to generating and using progression and completion information.

Support arrangements

22   Several of the features of good practice identified in the first 70 institutional audit reports are concerned with providing support to students within the context of widening participation and diversity. The role of staff development in effective student support is recognised in several of the reports. One report observed that an institution's widening participation strategy had prioritised the development of an integrated package of student support provision and enhanced staff development in student support and guidance. Meanwhile, another institution was encouraged to clarify the relationship between its overall strategic objectives - including widening participation - and its approach to identifying and supporting staff development activities. One institution's human resources strategy had acknowledged the challenges for the curriculum, learning and teaching methods, personal support and

support for learning that arise when 'operating at the sharp end of the widening participation agenda' [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 233]. Other reports noted that in some institutions, support for staff undertaking widening participation activities was provided centrally, while in others staff development activities, including on widening participation, were based in schools.

23   Several audit reports comment on the awareness, among institutions strongly committed to widening participation, of the learner support implications of an increasingly diverse student body, with a widening range of entry qualifications, backgrounds and needs. A key priority in the learning and teaching strategy of one institution, where providing a wide range of support for different communities of students was identified as a feature of good practice, was: 'to develop understanding of student independence in learning and models of delivery in promoting this, so as to improve retention and employability of students, within a national widening participation agenda' [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 233]. This audit report also noted a major investment in electronic resources and materials and further development of library information systems as part of the institution's 'Learn Anywhere, Work Anywhere' policy [University of Wolverhampton, paragraph 235].

24   One audit report describes how a widening student profile led an institution to recognise the importance of developing and adapting its approaches to meet the needs of its growing number of mature and part-time students. This included greater flexibility in timetabling, opportunities for future delivery by distance learning, and greater levels of tutorial support [Writtle College, paragraph 101]. Another report notes that statistical monitoring informed the measures taken by the institution to match its provision of learning support to the changing profile of its student population. Several reports, however, include recommendations that, as institutions implement widening participation strategies, they should ensure that learning resources and learner support services are adequate, appropriate and carefully monitored.

25   Initiatives noted in the reports as being intended to enhance academic support in the context of widening participation include:

- the creation of a centre for academic writing and provision of extra support in mathematics for engineering students

- the development of a strategy for mathematics support for entrants lacking the required qualification for economics

- increased tutorial support to produce individual learning plans, with associated staff development

- the establishment of a progression support team

- the designation among academic staff of a widening participation officer in every school of the institution

- the appointment of an effective learning officer to help students to develop their study skills as part of a school's response to the widening participation agenda

- a peer-mentoring scheme enabling students of proven competence to help new students to develop an understanding of the direction and expectations of their course.

26   In one institution, a package of measures developed to supplement its more traditional academic guidance and support arrangements included drop-in centres offering support and guidance in mathematics, academic writing skills and computing. This provision, identified as a feature of good practice, was developed initially to support and enhance the study skills of an increasingly diverse student population, but had since been made available to all students [Aston University, paragraph 114].

27   In another case, the report encouraged an institution to follow through the personal development planning approach in its agenda for widening participation. The process was considered to have the potential to provide more systematic information and analysis of the overall skills needs of the student population, and to enable the effective targeting of academic guidance and support. In another institution with a high proportion of students entering through widening participation avenues, the aim of personal and professional development was described as not just short-term 'remedial' support in the completion of their studies. The aim was to help students to develop strategies to enable them to cope independently both before and after graduation.

28   In one institution, continuing development of a range of local and central support services was identified as a feature of good practice. The audit report noted that the institution's arrangements for the personal support and guidance of students, based on careful consideration of 'student type and culture', were generally effective in their operation and well received by the student body [Coventry University, paragraph 135]. Several other audit reports comment on the alignment between the provision of student support services and widening participation strategies. In this context, another report notes that the relevant institution has developed a centralised 'one-stop shop' approach to student support within the context of its widening participation policy and current thinking on retention [Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, paragraph 136]. In another institution, where the audit team found evidence of the pervasiveness of the widening participation strategy in many other strategy documents, student support services were delivered on every campus. A centrally located 'Student Gateway' had also been created to provide students with speedy access to expertise and support regarding a range of non-academic problems which might affect their academic studies [University of Wolverhampton, paragraphs 233 and 236].

Conclusion

29   The information in the 70 institutional audit reports published by November 2004 suggests that a substantial number of institutions were making good progress in implementing widening participation strategies, integrating them with other institutional strategies and, in many cases, extending them to include policies on student retention. Several reports draw attention to the importance of monitoring progress in both widening access and student retention and achievement by collecting and analysing detailed data on admissions, progression and completion.

30   The reports also identify several features of good practice relating to the provision of support for students in the context of widening participation. It is significant that, in many institutions, policies and initiatives developed in relation to widening access and diversity have enhanced the student learning experience in general.

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 - Titles of *Outcomes from institutional audit* papers, Series 1

In most cases, *Outcomes...* papers are about 15 sides of A4. They are published on QAA's website to assist ready access. QAA retains copyright in the *Outcomes...* papers, but as noted earlier they may be freely used with acknowledgement.

Titles of current *Outcomes...* papers in the first series are listed below.

Title	Published date
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 arrangements	November 2005
Programme monitoring arrangements	January 2006
Assessment of students	January 2006
Learning support resources, including virtual learning environment	January 2006
Validation and approval of new provision 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
Subject benchmark statements	September 2006
Arrangements for combined, joint and multidisciplinary honours degree programmes	October 2006
Institutions' work with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies	October 2006
Institutions' support for e-learning	October 2006
Academic guidance, support and supervision, and personal support and guidance	October 2006
Institutions' frameworks for managing quality and academic standards	December 2006
Institution's support for widening participation and access to higher education	December 2006

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 Adobe Acrobat® 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.