



# **Newcastle Academy of Business and Technology**

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

May 2012

## Key findings about Newcastle Academy of Business and Technology

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in May 2012, 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 awards it offers on behalf of the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management and NCC Education.

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 these awarding organisations.

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

### Good practice

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

- the use of anti-plagiarism software to ensure consistency of the assessment process (paragraph 2.8)
- the extensive support given to students prior to and during induction (paragraph 2.11)
- the use of the Individual Learning Plan and wider academic and pastoral support for students (paragraph 2.12)
- all teaching staff hold a UK master's degree and a teaching qualification (paragraph 2.15).

### Recommendations

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

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

- implement in full the terms of reference for the Learning and Teaching Committee to systemise and formalise processes to ensure comprehensive oversight of the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities provided (paragraph 1.3).

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

- develop the annual monitoring and reporting process to provide cross-institutional evaluation of the provision to maintain academic standards (paragraph 1.8)
- adopt a strategic approach to teaching and learning that reflects current practice (paragraph 2.5)
- increase the opportunities for external staff development and training (paragraph 2.15)
- develop a system for formalising the approval process for public information (paragraph 3.6)
- review the accuracy and completeness of the attendance policy and associated documents (paragraph 3.8).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by QAA at Newcastle Academy of Business and Technology (the provider; the Academy). 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 the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management and NCC Education. The review was carried out by Mr Tom Cantwell, Ms Jenny Steer and Ms Barbara Thomas (reviewers), and Mr Maldwyn Buckland (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 documentation supplied by the Academy and its awarding organisations, including schemes of work, external verifiers' reports, annual monitoring reviews, awarding organisations' agreements, assignment presentation requirements and assessment and examination guidelines. Additional evidence was provided through meetings with staff and students, and scrutiny of samples of assessed student work.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- NCC Education Moderation Manual
- the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management guidelines.

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

Newcastle Academy of Business and Technology (the Academy) was formed in July 2005. It is a private academy established and registered with Companies House and managed by a Board of Directors. It is situated in the west end of Newcastle in a busy location, easily accessible to students and staff by local transportation. Its mission and purpose is to deliver professional qualifications which provide job-oriented and further study prospects for its students. Its main objective is to grow into a stable and successful educational provider in the north of England.

The Academy offers Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications at levels 4, 5 and 6 in Hospitality and Tourism Management awarded by the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management and qualifications at levels 5 and 7 in Computing and Business Management awarded by NCC Education.

At the time of the review, the Academy offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations, with student full-time equivalents (FTEs) in brackets:

### **Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management (OTHM)**

- Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management - level 4 (14 FTEs)
- Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management - level 5 (5 FTEs)
- Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management - level 6 (10 FTEs)

### **NCC Education**

- Diploma in Computing - level 5 (12 FTE)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management - level 7 (9 FTEs)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4).

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

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

The Academy has collaborative arrangements with OTHM and NCC Education and a direct awarding body agreement with the University of Huddersfield. This agreement aims to foster collaboration and facilitate progression from NCC Education programmes into the University's bachelor and master's degree programmes. In addition, the Academy benefits from recognition and articulation agreements between NCC Education and the University of Gloucestershire, and the OTHM and London South Bank University, which also provides entry into bachelor and master's degree programmes.

NCC Education programme assignments are first marked and second marked by the awarding organisation. Examinations are first marked by the provider and second marked and moderated by the awarding organisation. For programmes validated by the OTHM, the awarding organisation takes full responsibility for first and second marking of assignments. For all programmes, the Academy is responsible for the recruitment and admission of students, annual programme monitoring, staff development, resources and monitoring the quality of the student experience.

## **Recent developments**

The Academy was originally accredited in 2009 by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges (ASIC), receiving commendable grades in five aspects of its business operation, including premises, health and safety, management and staff resources. The Academy relocated to West Road, Newcastle in December 2009. Some parts of existing programmes were delivered at the old premises, with the rest completed in the current, new premises. The recent ASIC accreditation confirmed that the current staffing structures are appropriate for the early stages of the current expansion plans, but suggested that the organisational structure be kept under close review as student numbers grow.

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

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Student representatives planned the initial approach in developing the submission prior to dissemination to the wider student group. It was agreed that two surveys would be undertaken, consisting of programme evaluation and student satisfaction questionnaires. In addition, discussion was undertaken by student representatives from all programme areas. Fifty-seven students participated in the surveys, out of which a total of 43 individual views were included in the submission. The submission was largely positive, highlighting the management support given in preparation for the report, which addressed a range of topics, including admissions and transition, the student learning experience, assessment, feedback, learning resources, quality of teaching, staff and graduation. Students confirmed that they had been invited to take part in the whole review process, including attendance at the preparatory meeting and during the review visit.

## Detailed findings about Newcastle Academy of Business and Technology

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Academy's organisational structure identifies two main functions, administrative and academic, within which a range of roles and responsibilities are divided between directors and academic staff. Overall management of academic standards and quality assurance is the sole responsibility of two directors, who constitute the Board. The directors, identified as the Head of the Institution and Academic Head, lead on administrative and academic matters respectively. The structure gives each director a role in the other's area, for instance, within the academic area, the Head of the Institution carries out the role of Quality Assurance Coordinator. The Academy intends to delegate some of the wider management functions to additional post holders as the Academy develops.

1.2 Below the Board of Directors, a two-tier committee structure comprises the Programme Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee. While the lines of reporting from these committees are effective, in practice, given the size of the organisation and the scale of activity, some internal communication is informal. There are three types of recorded meeting: general meetings with staff that deal with the management and operation of programmes, committee meetings which relate mainly to academic standards, and the annual Board of Directors meeting. In line with their terms of reference, programme committee meetings are chaired by the programme leader and attended by members of the programme team and a student representative. Student representatives welcome the opportunity to attend the meetings, confirming their input is valued by the Academy, which often results in improvements to their learning experience and environment. Programme committees report to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

1.3 The Learning and Teaching Committee, chaired by the Academic Head, is attended by the Quality Assurance Coordinator, at least one course committee representative and one student representative. The Committee's terms of reference extend to the review and development of learning and teaching strategies, quality assurance policies and procedures, and general oversight of quality and standards. In practice, the Learning and Teaching Committee has conducted only a relatively small number of meetings, each of which has been confined to the consideration of a single programme, and has not yet taken the opportunity to develop or exercise its wider institutional brief. It is advisable that the Academy implements in full the terms of reference for the Learning and Teaching Committee to systemise and formalise processes to ensure comprehensive oversight of the academic standards and the quality of learning provided.

#### How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.4 The Academy has recently checked its practice and procedures against each section of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). Staff welcomed this development, confirming its effectiveness in developing their understanding and application of the *Code of practice* and wider aspects of the Academic Infrastructure.

1.5 Academic standards are set by the external awarding organisations with individual obligations incorporated into the awarding organisations' agreements. The division of responsibilities for implementing and maintaining standards are well understood by the

Academy and its students, and have been usefully summarised in tabular form. The two awarding organisations retain direct control over curriculum development, programme specifications, intended learning outcomes, assessment setting, marking verification and moderation, quality review of higher education and student appeals. In the case of NCC Education awards, however, the Academy is responsible for first marking of the examinations.

1.6 In addition to the awarding organisations' agreements, the Academy also takes account of the articulation agreements between OTHM and London South Bank University, and NCC Education and the University of Gloucestershire. In addition, the Academy has an awarding body agreement with the University of Huddersfield. The agreements, including top-up to honours and master's programmes, enhance progression opportunities for the students and are highly valued by them.

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

1.7 Quality assurance arrangements are built around annual monitoring and reporting, verification of assessment and feedback from students. The Academy communicates effectively with the awarding organisations through the operation of the assessment and verification process. Annual monitoring by the Academy begins with module reports prepared by lecturers. The module reports systematically gather student opinion that is incorporated into the awarding organisations' Annual Monitoring Report. These are summarised at programme level, collated by the Head of the Institution in the role of Quality Assurance Coordinator and forwarded to the Academic Head, who in turn prepares the Annual Monitoring Report for each awarding organisation.

1.8 Although annual monitoring and reporting is systematic, the Academy has not yet developed a process for producing an overarching institutional report for the evaluation of academic standards as a whole. In consequence, the annual monitoring process does not, at this stage, make a full contribution to the oversight of academic standards. It is desirable that the Academy develops the annual monitoring and reporting process to provide cross-institutional evaluation of provision to maintain academic standards.

1.9 Assessment, verification and moderation procedures are determined by the awarding organisations. In the case of OTHM programmes, marking and moderation are carried out exclusively by the awarding organisation. In the case of NCC Education programmes, the awarding organisation first marks and moderates assignments and second marks and moderates examinations after first marking by the Academy. The limited range of samples of assessed and verified work seen by the team confirmed that feedback to students is variable in volume and quality, although the teaching staff supplement this with brief handwritten feedback. The team also saw samples of assessed and verified work for NCFE programmes, although these are not currently offered by the Academy. By contrast with the other awarding organisations, NCFE had required the Academy to set, mark and internally verify assessment. The NCFE samples were helpful in confirming the Academy's capacity and potential to maintain academic standards in the direct management of assessment. In particular, the feedback to students, both in the body of the text and on the cover sheets, was comprehensive and helpful. Associated internal verification reports were thorough.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding organisations.

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The Academy's processes for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are such as described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4 and outlined in an organisational chart, which demonstrates linear responsibilities aligned to the management and enhancement of student learning.

### **How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?**

2.2 The Academy delivers programmes within the requirements of the awarding organisations, which benchmark the awards to external reference points, as referred to in paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6. Additionally, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores are clearly outlined in the entry requirements provided by the awarding organisations.

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

2.3 The awarding organisations provide teaching materials and benchmark quality and content. Lecturers prepare schemes of work, responding to the awarding organisations' guidelines and module content, which are then submitted to the management team. The management team reviews the schedules regularly to ensure their effectiveness.

2.4 There are a number of individual strategies and policies, for example the lecture observation policy and the learning resources strategy, but there is no formalised teaching and learning strategy. The Academy, nonetheless, articulates its position as one of continuous improvement to the student learning experience through the observation of its teaching staff, student feedback, maintaining and providing library facilities, underpinned by well qualified teachers and supportive administration staff.

2.5 Approaches to teaching and learning involve the use of methods that maximise opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-staff interaction, facilitating the development of peer relationships. These include icebreaking sessions, seminars, group discussions, presentations, research work, videotape clips, case studies, practical work and student handouts. Some lectures and seminars are supported by self-study teaching materials. Students are appreciative of the breadth of study opportunities available to them, confirming that some are available outside timetabled sessions. In addition, students confirm that the quality of teaching and the variety of methods employed motivated them towards higher levels of participation, enhancing their learning experience. The virtual learning environment is used by staff as a repository for materials and not as an interactive teaching tool. It is desirable that the Academy adopts a strategic approach to teaching and learning that reflects current practice to further develop and manage the quality of learning opportunities.

2.6 The lecture observation policy is implemented by the management team. In addition, peer review is also undertaken by members of the teaching staff. Systematic implementation of the lecture observation policy ensures that, where identified, poor teaching is addressed through the implementation of a staff teaching action plan, based on both the observer and student feedback and supported by appropriate staff development activities.

2.7 General and individual assessment feedback is provided by the awarding organisations. Both staff and students confirmed that feedback is limited and ineffective in providing appropriate support to aid academic progression. Staff augment the limited awarding

organisations' feedback with supplementary written feedback to provide assistance to the student learning process. Student skills are evaluated by the staff during taught sessions and formative feedback is provided against the programme stage and module intended learning outcomes during Individual Learning Plan review meetings, which is documented.

2.8 Students understand the assessment process and value the formative feedback from staff. An anti-plagiarism policy is in place and students confirm that they are required to put written work through plagiarism-detection software. A referencing and bibliography guide is also available for NCC Education programmes. It is good practice that the Academy requires all students to submit their work through anti-plagiarism software to ensure consistency of the assessment process.

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

2.9 The Quality Assurance Policy places strong reliance on the student voice. The Academy cited examples of student opinion, captured in individual learning plans and in the annual module reports, bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching materials provided by the awarding organisations. Students confirmed the effectiveness of this intervention on the standard and quality of the materials made available to them. They also confirmed that class representatives influence practice within the Academy through the formal meetings' structure and as intermediaries between fellow students and staff. The policy states that it aims to maintain academic standards in the context of an increasingly diverse student population. As a result, the Academy adapts its delivery to take account of the divergent expectations of students from different countries and cultures without undermining the standards and quality of provision. The Academy has also worked with an external trainer to develop 'ground rules' to manage the diverse student population, which are supported by an equal opportunities statement embedded in the student handbook. Staff cited examples of how effectively strategies are employed to support students with little experience of independent learning.

2.10 A student forum, identified as the Student Union, comprises programme representatives, the Academic Head and a programme tutor. Students spoke positively about the opportunity to bring a range of issues to the notice of the Academy. Feedback from Student Union meetings is reviewed by the Academic Head and Quality Assurance Coordinator and fed back to students. Student representatives ensure that student issues are discussed and extra-curricular activities planned. Students confirmed that their representatives provided effective liaison between the student body and staff, ensuring that matters were considered and acted upon in a timely manner.

2.11 Prior to arrival, students complete an application form where they describe their study intentions on arrival in the UK. This includes information about living arrangements and an understanding of what study in the UK involves. On arrival, students are informed of generic issues, including health care registration and financial planning, such as opening bank accounts. Students receive identity cards, email addresses and undertake a full programme induction supported by a student handbook. The handbook outlines the admissions and enrolment process and procedures regarding attendance, plagiarism and student complaints. The awarding organisations provide programme and module handbooks informing students about their programme and assessment information. Students confirm that the induction process is thorough and helpful. The extensive support given to students prior to and during induction provides a supportive framework for their transition into higher education in the UK and constitutes good practice.

2.12 Students engage with their Individual Learning Plan during one-to-one meetings with the module tutor. They receive support relating to a range of academic matters and arrangements can be made to give additional help for individual students based on agreed action plans developed between staff and students. The review meeting focuses on how the



student has addressed previously agreed actions. Students confirmed that the use of the Individual Learning Plan, supported by an open-door policy for academic support and pastoral care, is a positive aspect of their individual learning experience. The use of the Individual Learning Plan and the wider academic and pastoral support given to students ensures that appropriate learning interventions are available, which enriches the learning experience and represents good practice.

2.13 The Academy has implemented positive approaches to gathering student feedback at module and programme level, which includes feedback on the quality of teaching and a student complaints procedure. The procedure focuses on initial conciliation and confidentiality. Students are not fully cognisant with the complaints procedure, but understand that the Academy has an open-door policy for any students who have concerns. Academic appeals are managed by the awarding organisations and students can approach them directly. Students who have concerns about their programme can request meetings with the awarding organisations to clarify programme issues. The team noted the example of a representative from OTHM coming to talk to students.

2.14 The student submission was largely positive, in particular relating to the quality of information and access to open day events. The student learning experience was described as positive with helpful staff, good teaching and support for learning. Students confirmed that academic staff were highly valued, contributing substantially to their learning experience.

### **What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.15 The Academy has a commitment to staff development. Staff requests for development and progression opportunities, identified at the appraisal meetings, have been supported by the Academy. Staff confirmed, however, that increased opportunity for external staff development training would be welcomed to enhance their continuing professional development. Academic staff are required to hold a master's level qualification and all new staff undertake a Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) programme at level 3. The requirement for academic staff to hold a UK master's degree and recognised teaching qualification strengthens the teaching and learning process and represents good practice. It is desirable that the Academy increases the opportunities for external staff development and training activities to support the continuing professional development needs of academic staff.

2.16 Administration staff are also supported to undertake National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) appropriate to their role. New academic staff receive a thorough induction programme conducted with a member of the management team. Staff confirm that appraisals are undertaken each year to identify and implement staff development activities in support of improving teaching performance.

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

2.17 The student submission highlighted some concerns with learning resources, including the library provision, access to information technology and poor updating of the Academy's website. The Academy has acknowledged the concerns and is taking steps to address them. This was confirmed by the students. Students commented on the limited book resource and associated reading material available, but acknowledged that multiple copies of core texts are available and valued the Academy's proactive approach to purchasing specific titles on request. In addition, students have access at two local universities and have lending rights with the city libraries. Remote access to the virtual learning environment is available. The awarding organisations provide access to online textbooks.

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 Public information

#### **How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?**

3.1 The responsibilities for the publication of information are laid out clearly in the Academy's self-evaluation. The Academy is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of its prospectus and all content of its website, virtual learning environments and advertising accounts. It is also responsible for all marketing and publicity and for any public announcements however they are published, including online comments and uploads.

3.2 Programme handbooks and other programme information that is published by the awarding organisations are not the responsibility of the Academy and are supplied to students unchanged, except where formatting of text may be required. The Academy creates policy and procedure documents and is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of their content. All of these documents are available on the Academy's website and virtual learning environment.

3.3 The Academy's Publishing Policy sets out the procedure by which public information is checked for accuracy and completeness. The Administration Office, which includes the roles of the Administrator and the Administration Officer, provides the means by which all public information is checked and signed off. At the time of the review visit, the Administration Officer role was vacant due to financial restructuring. In effect, the entirety of the public information is checked and signed off by the Head of the Institution, who is also the Administrator. The Quality Assurance Coordinator performs an initial check of any information that is submitted for publication by a third party. This is also subject to final checking by the Administration Office, which effectively assures the accuracy and completeness of information.

3.4 The Academy's website contains a wide range of information, including policy and procedure documents, helpful information for new arrivals to the UK and details of awarding organisations, as well as the prospectus, the programme factsheets and Academy information. Prospective students can find most of what they need simply by visiting the website. Students commented upon the accuracy of the Academy's public information in the student submission, stating that it matched their expectations. Previously, the prospectus was not available online and had to be ordered. Students commented upon this in the written submission, suggesting that the website and public information generally had room for improvement. In response, the Academy made the prospectus available to download and updated the website before the review visit.

3.5 The Academy maintains a virtual learning environment on which it hosts all teaching materials, course handbooks, module guides, lecture slides and anything else that may be of use to students. In addition to the website and the virtual learning environment, the Academy has, since October 2011, made use of a social networking website account to communicate general messages to students and other interested parties. Third party uploads to this account are monitored by the Academy and edited to comply with the Publishing Policy. The Academy also has an account on a video-sharing website, also started in October 2011, but the account contains only one upload and has had no interactions.

### **How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?**

3.6 While the Academy's arrangements for checking the accuracy and completeness of public information are effective, they are the sole responsibility of a single individual. The Head of the Institution undertakes this responsibility ensuring that errors and inconsistencies are rectified. The Academy maintains that, due to the small scale of provision, this is adequate and does not require systemic checking and signing off at this time. It is desirable, nonetheless, that measures are taken to develop a system for formalising the approval process of public information to ensure its accuracy and completeness. The team was able to access all of the information available on the website and the virtual learning environment before and during the visit. The effectiveness of the checking procedure was evident in the Academy's output where no significant errors or inconsistencies were found.

3.7 Students are not involved directly in the checking of public information, although their opinions are considered. Examples of this include the students' comment that an immediately downloadable prospectus would be preferable to having to order one by telephone. The Academy acted upon this and the prospectus is now available to download from the website. Students found the Academy's public information to be accurate and reliable. All students agree that their experience after arrival is consistent with the information they received in advance.

3.8 Minor inconsistencies were found in some documents. An example of this is statements on attendance, where confusion between the awarding organisations' requirements, UK Border Agency requirements and the Academy's own policy left actual attendance requirements open to interpretation. Some programme factsheets, available on the website, suggested that students 'must attend all lectures and workshops without fail', while others asked students to 'maintain a satisfactory level of attendance'. The team was informed that students are told they must attend at least 80 per cent of sessions and that this is a UK Border Agency requirement. This figure was not reported, however, on any of the factsheets, nor in the Academy's Student Attendance Policy. It is desirable that the Academy reviews the accuracy and completeness of the attendance policy, and associated documents, to ensure clarity and coherence.

The team concludes that reliance **can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

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

Newcastle Academy of Business and Technology action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight May 2012						
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 provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the use of anti-plagiarism software to ensure consistency of the assessment process (paragraph 2.8)</li> </ul>	Provide further support to students through tutorial and demonstration to understand more widely about the anti-plagiarism software and plagiarism policy	October 2012 and then every January, April, July	Course/programme leaders and teaching staff	Zero per cent instances of plagiarism	Academic Head	Feedback from the awarding organisations, results of the anti-plagiarism report, Plagiarism Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extensive support given to students prior to and during induction (paragraph 2.11)</li> </ul>	<p>Involving Student Union in the induction programme for further support</p> <p>Extended pre-arrival support to students via information in various languages</p>	<p>September 2012 and then every January, April, July</p> <p>November 2012</p>	<p>Administrator, course/programme leaders, Student Union</p>	<p>At least 85 per cent positive feedback from the pre-arrival/ course induction feedback form</p> <p>Copies of pre-arrival support information in</p>	Head of the Institution	<p>Pre-arrival/ course induction feedback forms</p> <p>Pre-arrival support information copies</p>

<sup>3</sup> The provider 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 provider's awarding organisations.

				different languages		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the use of the Individual Learning Plan and wider academic and pastoral support for students (paragraph 2.12)</li> </ul>	Extended academic and pastoral support by providing one-to-one discussions between students and staff and, where necessary, providing additional training for skills deficiency	December 2012 and then every June and December	Course/programme leaders	At least 85 per cent positive feedback from the students' subsequent Individual Learning Review; students' appreciation and adherence to the Individual Learning Plan	Academic Head	Feedback forms and minutes of students' meetings, Individual Learning Reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all teaching staff hold a UK master's degree and a teaching qualification (paragraph 2.15).</li> </ul>	Ensure existing requirements for new teaching recruits  Establish an all teaching staff forum to share individual subject-specific knowledge	September 2012 and every December, March, June  February 2013	Course/programme leaders	100 per cent academic staff holding a UK master's and a teaching qualification  Conducting of forum meetings	Academic Head	Curriculum vitae, master's degree certificate, teaching qualification of newly recruited teaching staff  Forum meetings
<b>Advisable</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>advisable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement in full the terms of reference for the</li> </ul>	Consultation with academic staff, students and	January 2013	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Consultation received from staff, Student	Academic Head	Consultation report, minutes of the Learning and

Learning and Teaching Committee to systemise and formalise processes to ensure comprehensive oversight of the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities provided (paragraph 1.3).	awarding organisations to understand and develop an appropriate strategy to implement full terms of reference for the Learning and Teaching Committee  Evaluating the above developed strategy and updating staff, students and awarding organisations	March 2013		Union and awarding organisations  Formulation of the strategy to implement full terms of reference  75 per cent positive feedback during the evaluation of the strategy by Learning and Teaching Committee about the academic standards	Board of Directors	Teaching Committee meetings  Module feedback forms, minutes of the Course Committee meetings, minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee 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 provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop the annual monitoring and reporting process to provide cross-institutional evaluation of the provision to maintain academic standards (paragraph 1.8)</li> </ul>	Establish a cross-institutional annual monitoring and reporting process to maintain academic standards in liaison with the awarding organisations  Evaluation of the	November 2012  February	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Inclusion of academic standards in the Annual Monitoring Report in accordance with the awarding organisations	Academic Head	Annual monitoring process  Annual Monitoring

	process	2013		Successful completion of Annual Monitoring Report		Report for the year 2012 for all programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopt a strategic approach to teaching and learning that reflects current practice (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Produce the Teaching and Learning Policy in consultation with staff, Student Union and awarding organisations</p> <p>Evaluation of the above policy</p>	<p>February 2013</p> <p>May 2013</p>	Academic Head and course/ programme leaders	<p>Consultation and the produced Teaching and Learning Policy with final approval from the awarding organisations, staff and Student Union</p> <p>Overall rating of at least 4 received in the module feedback forms about learning experience, continuous enhancement of IT and library resources</p>	Head of the Institution	<p>Consultation Report, minutes of student meetings and staff meetings</p> <p>Module feedback forms, lecturer observation forms, minutes of students meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase the opportunities for external staff development and training (paragraph 2.15)</li> </ul>	Register with external bodies for staff development	November 2012	Coordinator	All teaching staff registration for continuing professional development with external bodies and an overall positive feedback	Head of the Institution	Registration documents with external bodies, staff appraisals

	Liaise with the awarding organisations for continuous staff training	March 2012		received during staff appraisal, promoting external staff development and training  Confirmations from external bodies about staff attendance and involvements in their training programmes		Attendance confirmation during training sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a system for formalising the approval process for public information (paragraph 3.6)</li> </ul>	Produce and implement a public information approval process, where necessary, seeking advice from the awarding organisations, Marketing Department and the Academy staff	October 2012  Public information to be checked for accuracy and completeness every December, February, April, June, August, October	Administrator, course/programme leaders, the awarding organisations, Marketing Department	Finalised copies of the approval process, confirmation from the awarding organisations, up-to-date and accurate information, staff and student feedback that the information published is relevant, complete and accurate  Approved copies of public information, comments from	Head of the Institution	Approved/signed off copies, communication with the awarding organisations, minutes of staff meetings, minutes of students' meetings



				the awarding organisations and the Academy staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the accuracy and completeness of the attendance policy and associated documents (paragraph 3.8).</li> </ul>	Review and edit the Attendance Policy for accuracy and completeness, and update related documents	October 2012	Administrator	At least 80 per cent positive feedback from students and staff about the updated Attendance Policy	Coordinator	Attendance Policy, minutes of students' meetings

## 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/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4).

## 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** Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

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

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

**awarding body** A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

**awarding organisation** An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

**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.

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

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

**enhancement** Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. 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** A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

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

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx)

*The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.*

**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 **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

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

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

**programme (of study)** An approved course of study which 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** An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically 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').

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

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

**RG 992 08/12**

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© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 648 4

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786