



# **KLC School of Design**

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

June 2012

## Key findings about KLC School of Design

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 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 University of Brighton.

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 this awarding body.

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 School has rigorous moderation arrangements that underpin the security of student assessment (paragraph 1.7)
- the creative use of technology on the blended learning diploma provides high-quality materials and conferencing facilities (paragraphs 2.7 and 3.4)
- academic support and student communication on the blended learning diploma are carefully designed and highly effective (paragraph 2.10).

## 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 more robust systems for supporting and communicating with full-time diploma students (paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.11)
- ensure a more formal and consistently rigorous approach to the business and minute-taking of School committees (paragraph 2.2).

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

- introduce a consistent management structure and associated terminology at the programme level (paragraph 1.2)
- develop an overarching teaching and learning strategy for higher education (paragraph 2.5)
- monitor the consistency and promptness of the generally detailed and helpful written assessment feedback (paragraph 2.8)
- give further consideration to how library provision might keep pace with future higher education needs (paragraph 2.18)
- provide students with an accurate and unambiguous statement on reassessment arrangements (paragraph 3.3)
- make clearer the level of study for the diploma programmes on information and publicity that describe the diploma programmes (paragraph 3.6).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at KLC School of Design (the provider; the School). 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 School delivers on behalf of the University of Brighton. The review was carried out by Mr Martin Eayrs, Dr Jenny Gilbert, Mr Brian Whitehead (reviewers), and Mr David Lewis (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 a range of internal documentation, such as relevant regulations and procedures, administrative and support arrangements, committee terms of reference and records, handbooks, student questionnaires and evaluations, statistical data, role descriptions and staff profiles. The team considered documentation relating to institutional agreements with the awarding body and course approvals, as well as an inspection report by the British Accreditation Council. A sample of assessed student work was scrutinised and meetings were held with staff, which included a representative of the awarding body and students.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

KLC School of Design (the School) is a small, specialist provider of interior and garden design education and training. It has a mission that includes the provision of innovative and inspirational courses and a commitment to fostering responsible design, encouraging the development of individuals and supporting those who wish to work in their chosen area through its close industry links. The higher education provision in interior design operates from distinctive modern premises that are adjacent to Chelsea Harbour Design Centre in London. It has a separate base for its further education provision in garden design. The School was founded in 1982, initially running short courses in interior design before developing longer programmes. The level 5 higher education diploma programmes in interior design were approved in 2010 as awards of the University of Brighton. In addition, the School offers a range of short and part-time further education courses. The School has been accredited by the British Accreditation Council since 1991, being reaccredited in 2011 for a four-year period. It is also accredited by the Open and Distance Learning Quality Council.

At the time of the review, there were 118 higher education students, 75 of them on the full-time programme. The majority, over 70 per cent, are recruited with an existing undergraduate degree and many are seeking a change of career. About 55 per cent are from the UK and less than 10 per cent are from outside the EU. Some 95 per cent of students are female. The higher education provision accounts for about 47 per cent of the total students in the School. In addition to the senior management team, there are 12 academic staff regularly teaching on the higher education programmes. These are supported by a range of external lecturers, referred to as support tutors, drawn from professional

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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).

practice. A further 14 staff provide support for the academic staff and students, through administrative, library and welfare roles.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body:

#### **University of Brighton**

- Diploma in Interior Design (one year full-time - level 5) (66 students)
- Diploma in Interior Design (two years plus one-term blended learning - level 5) (52 students)

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

The School states that it has responsibility for student recruitment and admissions, all aspects of student assessment, induction, resources, collecting and acting on student opinion, and public information, although some of the latter is subject to approval by the awarding body. Other responsibilities, including curriculum development, programme specifications, quality review and reporting, staff development and student appeals are stated to be shared between the School and the awarding body.

### **Recent developments**

The major recent development has been the formal relationship established between the School and the University of Brighton. Following the approval of the Diploma in Interior Design as a level 5 University of Brighton award, the University has now approved a BA (Hons) degree in interior design, which the School will offer from September 2012.

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

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Separate written submissions were made by students on the full-time and blended learning versions of the diploma, and these were presented with the self-evaluation. Full-time students were briefed on the REO process, following which volunteer focus groups recorded their experiences, using a set of prompt topics that broadly reflected the structure and coverage of the self-evaluation and REO report. Separate focus groups reported on behalf of the September and January recruitment cohorts. The same approach was used to engage the blended learning students, but the briefing was given electronically and student representatives used email to collect the views of their cohort groups. The submissions provided the team with a range of clear student perceptions, which informed its planning for the review visit, including the topics to be explored in the meeting with current students.

## Detailed findings about KLC School of Design

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The School is clear about its delegated responsibilities for the management of academic standards, as defined in the partnership agreement with the awarding body and subject to university regulations. It has substantial responsibilities for the designing, setting and marking of student work, as well as curriculum development, programme specifications, quality review and reporting, staff development and student appeals. Although the partnership is still at an early stage, responsibilities are being fulfilled and key staff are enthusiastic about the new academic challenges that arise from adjusting to University requirements.

1.2 The School has well defined management and reporting structures, although these are still evolving, with some inconsistencies evident at the programme level. There is, as recognised in the self-evaluation, scope for further sharing between the two modes of delivery, as well as consistency in the management titles and operational terminology used across the programmes. A Director of Flexible Learning leads the blended learning programme, supported by a Head of Blended Learning and a blended learning senior tutor. The Director of Interior Design leads the full-time programme, supported by the Director of Full-Time Diploma. A board of directors determines the strategic direction of the company. The Academic Board is responsible for the overall provision, with the Director of Studies coordinating the work of the directors leading the programmes.

1.3 Overall, monitoring and reporting mechanisms are explicit and effective. The Academic Board has a direct role in monitoring the programmes and ensuring appropriate academic standards, as well as the quality of learning opportunities. It reviews the programmes each term, drawing on agreed targets, internal monitoring information, external examiners' reports and feedback from student representatives. Quality improvement plans are produced from these monitoring meetings and circulated appropriately. The reports of the Academic Board are used, with contributions from course directors, departmental heads and the Academic Planning Coordinator, to inform the annual academic health report. This health report is provided for the awarding body and is detailed and informative. It is approved by the Principal before being submitted to the University.

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

1.4 The higher education programmes have been through a formal validation process with the University of Brighton, which has ensured their alignment to *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), subject benchmark statements and relevant sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). This alignment with the Academic Infrastructure is clear in key documentation, including programme specifications, but the process of embedding is still ongoing. It is being helped by close working relations with the awarding body, particularly the University link tutor, and staff development sessions provided by the School and the University. Teaching staff have variable and sometimes limited understanding of the Academic Infrastructure, for example in respect of the FHEQ and some sections of the *Code of practice*.

1.5 The School makes effective use of other external reference points and is accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Further and Higher Education and the Open and Distance Learning Quality Council. An important reference comes from the professional demands of the interior design industry to which the programmes are targeted. This is reflected in the School's mission and is evident in the range of industrial contacts and the close links with the British Institute of Interior Design, which include student membership of the Institute as part of course fees.

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

1.6 The Diploma programmes are wholly School-designed and provide a strong industrial focus. A progression route for diploma students has now been established with the successful validation of a BA (Hons) degree in interior design. The need to incorporate enhanced academic demands to meet the expectations of FHEQ level 5 and level 6 provision has provided a range of challenges to which staff and students are still adjusting.

1.7 The School has extensive delegated responsibilities for assessment and has a robust set of moderation procedures that underpin the effectiveness and security of academic standards. This area of good practice involves all summative assessments being second marked by directors or senior tutors. An important third stage results in the marks being scrutinised by a moderation panel before a sample is submitted to the external examiner and consideration by the examination board. The implementation of these procedures is helped by the School's responsiveness to external advice, such as from the University link tutor and external examiner. Advice is carefully considered and responded to in the annual academic health report. At present, the School does not offer direct feedback to the external examiner on the content of reports. The first external examiner's report provides assurance that assessments are being undertaken appropriately and that academic standards are being secured.

1.8 The programmes are subject to clear procedures for academic appeals and mitigating circumstances laid down in the assessment regulations of the University. The School also has a documented process for academic misconduct and has introduced anti-plagiarism software for use with all written work.

1.9 The sharing of good practice between staff is largely dependent on informal, though well established, mechanisms. Tutors work closely together, including through the tradition of group teaching on studio-based design projects. Further thought may need to be given to more formal arrangements for identifying and sharing good practice as the higher education provision develops.

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 body.

## **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 School has clearly delegated responsibility for many areas of the quality of learning opportunities, including teaching and learning, student support and learning resources. The management and reporting structures are as described in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3. The Academic Board has formal responsibility for learning opportunities and has

been approved by the awarding body to carry out the functions of a course board. The University expects course boards to include student membership, but currently there is no such representation on the Academic Board.

2.2 The effectiveness of the Academic Board, as well as other School committees, is constrained by the lack of standard agenda and the informality and inconsistency of the minutes. This limits the effective auditing of its discussions and actions. The termly briefing meetings between the Managing Director and staff make a valuable contribution to the management of learning opportunities, but are not minuted. The student representatives' meetings are a key forum for collecting the opinions of students, but, again, minutes are informal and do not record which student cohorts are present.

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

2.3 The use of the Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points are broadly as described in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5. Explicit reference has been made to the subject benchmark statements for architecture and art and design in the development and approval of the provision. The School acknowledges that there have been some difficulties in adjusting its own procedures to ensure alignment with those of the University and the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure. The process is ongoing and progress should be helped by the decision to introduce more school-wide procedures and working templates, for example in relation to assessment.

2.4 The regular inputs by employers and external practitioners into practical studio projects helps to ensure that the programmes are referenced to the needs of industry and are highly valued by students. Core staff share teaching with these industry-based tutors and also make regular visits to professional design studios. Additional benchmarking with industry needs is achieved through the opportunities for student placements and the ongoing engagement with the British Institute of Interior Design.

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

2.5 The School has a detailed tutor training manual and a set of guidelines that are used to guide the teaching of new staff and industry-based tutors. The staff are able to articulate their approach to teaching, but there would be benefit in producing a formal, overarching teaching and learning strategy for higher education. Such a strategy might provide a context for the more detailed guidance by defining the underpinning principles and approaches that the School seeks to promote.

2.6 The quality of teaching and learning is appropriately evaluated and supported by a number of activities. These include a recently introduced peer observation scheme, the reports from which are detailed and evaluative, identifying areas of strength and improvement. The results of observations can feed into staff appraisal and development discussions. The Principal and departmental heads also use drop-in observations as a way of monitoring teaching and sharing good practice. New staff are observed by senior staff members.

2.7 The virtual learning environment is used creatively to provide a range of valuable online teaching materials for students on the blended learning diploma. The materials are well produced and organised for access by students and include lectures, demonstrations, instructive tutorials and video clips.

2.8 The School has clear arrangements for giving written feedback to students on their assessed work, but the scrutiny of work reveals some inconsistencies in the quality of their implementation. Standard feedback forms are used consistently and the feedback provided is extensive and helpful. However, the marking criteria used for projects are sometimes generic and the language used in written staff comments does not consistently reflect the grade awarded. Students also express some concern that the agreed deadlines for providing feedback are not always met.

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

2.9 A varied and suitable range of mechanisms is in place for student welfare and support, which are clearly described in student handbooks. Students receive an induction and an introduction to the facilities and services, Academic support is then provided through individual studio teaching, regular studio critiques and programme materials available on the virtual learning environment. Students also have periodic tutorials, which are called surgeries on the blended learning diploma. There is a dedicated student welfare officer as the initial contact for personal support and focused careers advice.

2.10 Students recognise that effective communication is important for their support, given the intensity of the full-time diploma and the fact that blended learning students spend most of their study time off-site. Communication on the blended learning diploma has been carefully considered, with highly effective use being made of the virtual learning environment for group interaction, dialogue between students and tutors and generously timed personal tutorials. Students attest to the effectiveness of the single telephone contact for raising concerns and the timeliness of staff responses. Some full-time students express the view that the quality of careers support does not match that which they were led to expect.

2.11 There is need to implement more robust mechanisms for supporting and communicating with students on the full-time diploma. While the arrangements are clearly articulated in published information, their implementation has created a number of issues for students. These include a frustration among some that their voice is not heard, despite the system of student representatives, regular feedback questionnaires and the use of emails and studio notices for conveying staff responses. Not all are aware of their student representatives, a situation not helped by the representatives being changed each term. While students value the support given during studio teaching, some regard the periodic general tutorials as perfunctory and unhelpful.

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

2.12 The School has effective arrangements for staff development, which are clearly defined within the training policy contained in the staff handbook. The arrangements are subject to explicit approval procedures and include an allocation of two days annually for improving the quality of teaching. These are available for full-time and part-time staff. Other in-house training focuses on skills updating, for example in the use of new design software. Staff have also benefitted from University activities, including an introduction to teaching in higher education and the annual learning and teaching conference.

2.13 An important and beneficial feature of staff development is the School's commitment to ensure that all core staff on the higher education programmes obtain the University of Brighton Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning. Three members of staff have already gained the Certificate and two others are enrolled for the coming year. The benefits of the Certificate include an increasing staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and its use. The School is aware of the potential value of sharing this experience more widely among the staff.



2.14 There is a clear annual staff appraisal scheme that contributes to the identification of development needs and later reviews the success of any related activities. The process is described in the published staff appraisal notes.

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

2.15 The process for managing resources is straightforward and ensures that academic staffing, accommodation and facilities reflect the learning outcomes and industry focus of the programmes. Funding needs are initially determined as part of the programme validation process and subsequently reviewed through the Academic Board review and monitoring process described in paragraph 1.3. The Board of Directors takes final responsibility for all funding decisions.

2.16 The number and profile of the teaching staff are appropriate, particularly in respect of the balance between core staff and the wide range of industry practitioners. New core staff are required to have teaching experience and a relevant subject qualification. The launch of the new honours degree might require the School to reflect on the number of staff with master's degree qualifications.

2.17 The design studios and general facilities are well matched to the needs of the Diploma programmes and their learning outcomes. As a condition of entry, students must provide their own laptop computers and a range of industry-standard software as prescribed by the School.

2.18 The higher education programmes have created a need for the School to consider how its library provision can keep pace with changing demands, particularly from the new essay-based modules. There may be merit in introducing a formal annual review of library requirements and provision. The School has already responded to student concerns by purchasing books on the essential course reading lists and negotiating access to a number of libraries within other local academic institutions. The School is considering subscribing to EBSCO, an international electronic book and journal subscription service.

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 School publishes a range of generally clear and accurate information in electronic and printed form for prospective and enrolled students, staff and other participants such as former students and professional design contacts. An attractively produced and informative brochure offers outline information of programmes for prospective students. Expanded programme information is available on the well designed website, as well as a range of other information of interest to international students. Information on disability is less easy to locate on the website and is absent from the brochure. Once they have accepted places, students are given advance access to the virtual learning environment.

3.2 On arrival at the School, students are provided with extensive and informative handbooks, in electronic and printed versions. Together, the general student handbook and course handbook offer details of the programmes, welfare, academic conduct and health and safety information, as well as relevant policies and regulations.

3.3 The School should review the information it provides for students on assessment regulations to ensure an accurate and unambiguous statement on reassessment arrangements. Although the School has published a simplified student version of the awarding body's regulations, some current students have a different understanding of reassessment regulations to those of the staff. At the project level, students are given clear and detailed briefings, with explicit assessment instructions.

3.4 The virtual learning environment is valued by students, particularly those on the blended learning diploma, as a vehicle for programme information and learning materials. Particularly effective use is made of the web conferencing platform for engaging blended learning students in interactive online learning activities. The full-time students encounter some difficulties with the virtual learning environment, for example with inconsistent file structures and links that are not functioning.

3.5 Staff receive adequate and authoritative information through a range of mechanisms, including a comprehensive staff handbook. Relevant staff also have electronic access to detailed programme information and a range of academic support through well structured shared drives.

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

3.6 The responsibilities for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of published information are clear overall. The School has generally ensured that printed and electronic publicity materials are produced to a high standard, with careful attention to appearance and content. However, there is a need to ensure that the level of study is more clearly evident on public information relating to the programmes. Programme leaders are responsible for the initial content of published programme materials. This is then reviewed by the Marketing Director and approved by the University before publication. The 2011 report of the British Accreditation Council for Further and Higher Education noted that the level of the Diploma in Interior Design was not included on the cover of the handbook for the programme.

3.7 The promotion of the School is carried out in accordance with a clear marketing and admissions policy. There is an annual review to assess the effectiveness of the policy and all promotional activities, which generates action plans for the following cycle.

3.8 There are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring the accuracy and currency of information published on the School website. Programme content is monitored by course managers, who have administrative responsibility for the programmes. An in-house information technology team manages the site on a day-to-day basis, while the Marketing Director undertakes an annual review of the whole website.

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>

KLC School of Design action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight in June 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 School has rigorous moderation arrangements that underpin the security of student assessment (paragraph 1.7)</li> </ul>	Review assessment procedures across all courses within the School to ensure consistency	October 2012	Course leaders	Improved feedback from tutors on updated assessment and time management procedures on all courses	Director of Studies	End-of-year course reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the creative use of technology on the blended learning diploma provides high-quality materials and conferencing facilities (paragraphs 2.7 and 3.4)</li> </ul>	Review the virtual learning environment and its management to ensure clarity of accessing diverse material	September 2012	Operations Director	Students' improved navigation to course material and positive response to the question regarding Student Support Services (virtual learning environment) on the end-of-course questionnaire	Course leaders	End-of-year course reports

<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 body.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>academic support and student communication on the blended learning diploma are carefully designed and highly effective (paragraph 2.10).</li> </ul>	Review and enhance careers support service and the public information on careers, and recruit additional support for careers service	January 2013	Managing Director	<p>Student feedback to indicate satisfaction with careers service at student representatives' meetings</p> <p>End-of-course feedback to indicate that service received was as expected</p>	Main Board and Academic Board	End-of-year questionnaires, student representatives' meeting
<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 more robust systems for supporting and communicating with full-time diploma students (paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, and 2.11)</li> </ul>	<p>Student representation on Academic Board was raised and discussed</p> <p>The Academic Board found that due to the intensive nature of the course, the current structure of student representatives' meetings at the end of each term continues to be effective and workable</p>	July 2012	Secretary to Academic Board	Positive response from students to questions regarding support and communication at student representatives' meetings	Academic Board	End-of-term Academic Board minutes and end-of-year questionnaires

	Add mid-term student representatives and tutors' meetings  Review day-to-day communication to full-time diploma students to clarify information, specifically the minutes following student representatives' meetings to be emailed to all students	Academic year 2012 - 13  September 2012	Course leaders  Secretary to the Academic Board and course leaders	Course leaders to confirm clarity of information at termly reviews  Student representatives to confirm that all students received minutes and action points from last meeting by email	Academic Board  Academic Board	End-of-year questionnaires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure a more formal and consistently rigorous approach to the business and minute-taking of School committees (paragraph 2.2).</li> </ul>	In association with new meetings matrix, review and introduce standard templates for meeting agendas and minutes	September 2012	Operations Director	Clarity of documentation, good record-keeping	Main Board	End-of-year reports
<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>introduce a consistent management structure and</li> </ul>	Review and clarify reporting structure on both diploma and BA (Hons)	September 2012	Principal, Managing Director, Director of	Clarity of roles and responsibilities of academic	Academic Board and Main Board	End-of-year reports

associated terminology at the programme level (paragraph 1.2)			Studies	department throughout the School		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop an overarching teaching and learning strategy for higher education (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	Teaching and learning strategy in place	July 2012	Principal and circulated to Academic Board	Common ethos and understanding of teaching and learning strategy throughout the School	Academic Board	End-of-year reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the consistency and promptness of the generally detailed and helpful written assessment feedback (paragraph 2.8)</li> </ul>	<p>Review and improve assessment terminology to ensure consistency with grades awarded</p> <p>Course leaders to ensure clarity of communication to students regarding deadlines for feedback</p>	Academic year 2012 - 13	Course leaders and academic team	<p>Consistency within assessments and feedback</p> <p>Feedback given to students within set deadlines</p>	Academic Board	<p>Meetings with student representatives, end-of-year questionnaires</p> <p>Monitor through internal verification process</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give further consideration to how library provision might keep pace with future higher education needs (paragraph 2.18)</li> </ul>	<p>Institute a formal annual review of library requirements and provision</p> <p>Increase budget resources and invest in increased provision</p>	January 2013	Managing Director, course leaders, Librarian	Increased use of library at the School and external library resources of other higher education institutions and online resources	Main Board and Academic Board	Improved quality of research, end-of-year questionnaires, end-of-year reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide students with an accurate and unambiguous statement on</li> </ul>	Statement on reassessment arrangements to be compiled	September 2012	Course leaders, Academic Planning Coordinator	Student awareness of assessment processes	Academic Board	Student representatives' meetings and end-of-year

reassessment arrangements (paragraph 3.3)						questionnaires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make clearer the level of study for diploma programmes on information and publicity that describe the diploma programmes (paragraph 3.6).</li> </ul>	Review and improve clarity of information on diploma programmes in public information	Academic year 2012 - 13	Managing Director, Marketing Director, Operations Director	Clear level differentiation for enquirers between the diploma programmes	Main Board	Marketing reports

## 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 one to eight, with levels four 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 996 09/12**

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Fax 01452 557070  
Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 652 1

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786