



# **Kensington College of Business**

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

September 2012

## Key findings about Kensington College of Business

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in September 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 Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, NCFE, the University of London and the University of Wales.

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 bodies and 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**:

- thorough engagement with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 1.5)
- the internal moderation on NCFE courses, which produces highly effective reports leading to improvements in practice (paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7)
- the provision of examples of exceptionally thorough module level evaluation (paragraph 1.10)
- the prompt and effective response to issues of concern raised by students (paragraph 2.7)
- extensive, continuous and accessible support for study skills (paragraph 2.8)
- integrated academic and pastoral tutorial support for students (paragraph 2.9)
- the provision of examples of detailed, rapid and constructive electronic feedback (paragraph 2.11).

### 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:

- strengthen the formal recording of business by the Academic Board and related committees (paragraphs 1.1 and 1.8)
- ensure that action plans include measurable targets set with realistic dates for achievement (paragraph 1.8)
- ensure that feedback to students is explicitly linked to achievement of the learning outcomes (paragraph 2.11)
- ensure that all published information is consistent and accurate in all media (paragraph 3.6).

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

- continue to provide additional support for students undertaking the dissertation stage of the MSc Computing (paragraph 1.9).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Kensington College of Business (the provider; the College). 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 Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA), NCFE, the University of London and the University of Wales. The review was carried out by Mr Harry Davison, Mrs Viki Faulkner, Ms Ann Hill (reviewers), and Mr Robert Jones (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 extensive documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding bodies and organisations, and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- the regulations of its awarding bodies and organisations.

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

Kensington College of Business (the College) was established in 1982 in South Kensington, which explains the origin of its name. As the student numbers increased in the mid to late 1980s, the College outgrew its original premises and in 1988 moved to Fulham. As the College's reputation in professional business courses grew, it started to offer part-time evening classes, which needed to be held in Central London and so required the hire of additional premises there. The College's provision of degree courses began to expand in the mid to late 1990s, and there was a need for more accommodation. For both of these reasons, in 2000 the College moved to its present building in Holborn, Central London, from which it now runs all its courses. The size of the building is approximately 25,000 square feet over eight floors and the location is convenient for full-time students living anywhere in London and part-time students whose jobs are mainly concentrated in the City and centre of London.

There are currently 487 students at the College, comprising 397 full-time and 90 part-time students. Of these, 360 are non-EU students and 127 EU students. There are currently 30 academic staff (approximately 15 full-time equivalents).

At the time of the review, the College offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding bodies and organisations:

### **Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA)**

- Certificate in Company Secretarial and Share Registration Practice
- Chartered Secretaries Qualifying Scheme

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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).

### **NCFE**

- Diploma in Business Studies
- Advanced Diplomas in Business Studies

### **University of London**

- LLB (Hons)
- Diploma in Law

### **University of Wales**

- MSc Computing
- MBA
- BA Business Studies (Hons)
- BA Business, Accounting and Finance (Hons)
- BA Information Management (Hons)
- BA Marketing (Hons)

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

Responsibility for academic standards is retained by the College's awarding bodies and organisations, subject to the College's participation in the assessment processes of the NCFE, the University of Wales and the ICSA Certificate in Company Secretarial and Share Registration Practice. These courses were designed by the College and validated by the awarding bodies and organisations. All the awarding bodies and organisations have delegated to the College responsibility for the quality of the higher education it provides.

## **Recent developments**

The College validation agreements with the University of Wales are coming to an end and, in parallel, it has been approved by Glyndŵr University as a partner college. It plans to start delivering degree courses validated by Glyndŵr in October 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. The students produced a submission based on documentation summarising student views, supplemented by informal consultation. It was clearly focused and was helpful to the review team. The team had a productive meeting with representative students during the review visit.

## Detailed findings about Kensington College of Business

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College provides effective oversight of its higher education provision, but this could be better evidenced. It is a not-for-profit organisation led by a small Board of Directors with an independent Chair. It has strong central leadership provided by the Academic Board, which acts as a subcommittee of the Board of Directors. The Academic Board is the main decision-making and quality-monitoring body of the College and meets informally on a weekly basis to ensure timeliness of response. More formal monthly meetings are minuted, but notes from these meetings often fail to provide an adequate record of the business conducted or decisions taken. While the decision-making process is swift and effective, it is too dependent on informal communication and this is a common feature of many of the College quality improvement processes. Standards and quality would be better assured by improved record keeping.

1.2 The College has a comprehensive system of advisory committees that sit below the Academic Board and are responsible for the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards at an operational level. There are quarterly committee meetings that consider student appeals, mitigating circumstances and aspects of unfair practices. The outcomes of appeals feed into internal examination boards and course team meetings before going to the cross-college course board committee and external examination boards where appropriate.

1.3 The College is clear about the responsibilities it holds for the management of academic standards with each of its four awarding partners. The majority of the College's provision is validated by the University of Wales, the quality cycle of which leads to the production of an annual monitoring report that is signed off by the Joint Board of Study, a body that includes representation from the College, the University, the external examiners and student representatives. Courses validated by other awarding bodies and organisations also undergo an annual self-evaluation cycle, the format of which varies appropriately according to the nature of the delegated responsibilities.

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

1.4 The College makes substantial and effective use of the Academic Infrastructure as its principal reference point. Professional courses such as the Certificate in Company Secretarial and Share Registration Practice align with industry standards and the Qualifications and Credit Framework. These, along with the regulations of its awarding bodies and organisations, are the main external reference points that the College uses to maintain its standards.

1.5 The College has an embedded culture of engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and other relevant external reference points. It has made effective use of external advisers to inform College practice in the design of its own awards for validation since 1994. Beginning with qualifications awarded by ICSA, the College expanded its portfolio by developing a Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Business Administration validated by NCFE and, in 2008, BA (Hons) and MBA courses validated by the University of Wales. Through the design of these courses, the creation of the programme specifications and the associated learning outcomes and assessment strategies, the College has demonstrated a clear engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, most notably

*The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* descriptors, the subject benchmark statements and relevant aspects of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*), especially with regard to *Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review* and *Section 6: Assessment of students*.

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

1.6 The College uses an appropriate combination of external verifiers and external examiners, appointed by the awarding bodies and organisations, and internal verifiers or moderators appointed by the College, to assure the academic standards of its courses. On the NCFE courses, the College has appointed an internal verifier, who is a subject specialist with the remit of approving assessment design and marking, although this is not a requirement of the awarding organisation. It implements this additional level of quality assurance to align the courses with the rest of the College's provision and help secure standards. Where the College is responsible for conducting assessments, external examiners confirm that the academic standards of the College are in line with national expectations.

1.7 Internal moderation is confirmed as effective by the external verifiers and external examiners of the awarding bodies and organisations. Internal systems produce highly effective reports on the NCFE programmes, with the best examples leading to improvements in practice. However, there are some instances, such as the dissertation stage of the MSc Computing, where the internal verification system is proving less effective (see paragraph 1.9).

1.8 External examiners' reports are received directly by the Principal and are responded to appropriately, but the action plans that result from them and the monitoring of associated activities would benefit from strengthening. External examiners' reports generate action plans, which are monitored by the Academic Board of the College. However, a number of action plans lack detail and there is little formal evidence of the plans being monitored by the Academic Board. The lack of specific, measurable, time-bound targets on action plans was also an issue raised at the Joint Board of Studies in April 2012 and an improvement in the quality of the action plans produced would have a significant, positive impact on the quality improvement cycle of the College. The College is currently in the process of formalising a system to ensure that all module leaders receive a copy of the external examiners' reports.

1.9 The external examiner for the MSc Computing has raised questions about the academic standards of the dissertation stage of this award and this is an area of ongoing discussion between the College and the examiner. The College had, in discussion with the University of Wales, agreed a plan that would have addressed this concern through a restructuring of the existing course to strengthen earlier modules and thus develop the academic skills of the students. However, it has not yet been possible to implement the planned revisions to the course. Consequently, the College needs to continue to strengthen the support given to students undertaking the dissertation stage of the MSc Computing.

1.10 Module evaluations are completed by all module leaders and are presented at the College course team meeting. Although a standard form is provided for module evaluations, few staff use it and the quality of the reports is very variable. Some module evaluations, such as that for Current Issues in International Human Resource Management, are exceptionally thorough, including specific comments related to the students in the group and a clear cohort breakdown demonstrating levels of achievement. Others are very brief and lack any clear evaluative content. The College would benefit from sharing the good

practice evident in the stronger examples of module evaluations. The Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee, a useful monthly forum where staff meet together to discuss issues of quality enhancement, is greatly valued by both academic and administrative staff and could facilitate the sharing of such examples of good practice.

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 bodies and 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 management structure described in paragraphs 1.1 - 1.3 also supports the delivery of learning opportunities.

2.2 The College has clearly identified mechanisms to enhance the quality of learning opportunities. It has defined responsibilities for course delivery, documented through the partnership agreements. There are regular curriculum and team meetings to discuss issues that arise, which feed into the process of annual course review. The Academic Board monitors the quality of learning opportunities through the examination of annual course reviews, course team meetings and course boards where student progress is checked. External examiners confirm that the College provides appropriate learning opportunities for students.

2.3 The College produces a five-year plan for the University of Wales courses that outlines the annual cycle of course delivery. This is a useful document that could be developed by the College, with the addition of other courses, admission, student evaluation and College review activity.

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

2.4 The external reference points are integrated into the current management and quality assurance arrangements, as described in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5. The appropriate sections of the *Code of practice* relating to learning opportunities are taken into account in the delivery of the higher education courses. College staff are well supported by the awarding bodies and organisations in respect of the Academic Infrastructure. In particular, the University of Wales moderator has provided helpful development workshops to academic staff on this topic.

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

2.5 Staff are clearly aware of what is expected of them in the delivery of teaching and the use of learning opportunities. The College Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, the Academic Policy, Staff Handbook and guidance from the awarding bodies and organisations are valuable reference sources in the design, delivery and assessment of courses. Students are satisfied with the quality of teaching and value the variety of teaching methods employed.

2.6 The College has a peer review process for learning and teaching with the aim of sharing best practice through the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee. All lecturers are required to participate in peer review at least once a year, both as an observer and as the person to be observed.

2.7 The College responds promptly and effectively to issues of concern raised by students. Both in their submission and at their meeting with the team, students cited many examples of such action that they greatly appreciated. Students have the opportunity to comment on teaching and learning opportunities through module evaluation, course representation at the quarterly course board and the recently introduced Student Council. This initiative is supported by the College with the provision of a dedicated room for council use. This consultative method works equally well in other areas, including student support and learning resources.

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

2.8 The College has a comprehensive policy to ensure the support of students from admissions through to the end of the course. Teaching staff cooperate effectively with support staff to achieve this end. There is an informative and effective induction process that introduces the student to the College, the awarding body or organisation and the course of study. A particularly valuable part of the induction process is focused upon study skills. This is carefully tailored to the varying needs of the different courses. Following induction, students obtain further support from the Study Skills Tutor by attending drop-in sessions or seek guidance from their subject tutors, as they progress through each year of the course. Overall, the support of study skills is extensive, continuous and accessible.

2.9 The College effectively supports students through the integrated academic and pastoral support system. The recent introduction of the personal tutor role and the support given was confirmed by the students, academic and administrative staff during the review. There is a close working relationship between students and staff, and pastoral support is successfully focused on the needs of international students. At their meeting with the team, students repeatedly emphasised the exceptional helpfulness and accessibility of their tutors.

2.10 The Academic Policy requires that the marking and feedback on student work be returned within three weeks. Students confirm that feedback is given in a timely manner. The College recognises the value of formative assessment feedback, particularly on those courses where the summative assessment is externally set. Staff described the use of formative feedback at the end of lessons. To support the writing of dissertations, weekly sessions help students plan out targets and monitor progress. Students confirmed that feedback is given on draft work to ensure that this work is focused on the assessment task.

2.11 There are examples of good practice in written feedback to students, but it is variable overall and the feedback template needs revision. Contemporary Issues in International Human Resource Management and Marketing Communication are MBA modules that provide rapid electronic feedback on student assignments through the College virtual learning environment. The scripts are annotated with detailed feedback and there is general feedback on the overall assignment. The feedback clearly demonstrates how the mark is arrived at and gives the students useful guidance on how the work may be improved. Students confirm that the feedback is easily accessible online. This is an example of good practice that could with advantage be widely disseminated within the College, as the quantity and quality of written feedback examined by the team and confirmed by external examiners is variable. This is an area on which the College has been working over the past year and students confirmed that they had already witnessed an improvement and expressed a general level of satisfaction. There is a college-wide checklist within the feedback template, but it is not used consistently by staff and needs improvement, supported by supplementary



guidance, in order to meet the needs of students and external scrutiny. Feedback sampled during the review was often not explicitly linked to achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

2.12 Staff are well qualified and maintain their currency of knowledge through engagement in education and training, links with the awarding institutions and professional bodies. The awarding bodies and organisations see staff records when programmes are validated and approve any changes in teaching staff.

2.13 The College is committed to staff development. It supports staff requests for development and progression opportunities, arranges workshops on a wide range of pedagogic topics and plans to provide all academic staff and some administrative staff with the opportunity to undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education from Glyndŵr University. Staff are also keen to enhance their qualifications with postgraduate awards. They value the development sessions run by the University of Wales about such topics as student engagement, assessment and feedback.

2.14 The Principal appraises staff on an informal basis, but there is currently no formal process for academic staff appraisal. The College has recently introduced a formal process for the appraisal of administrative staff and is in the process of introducing a similar approach for academic staff. New staff confirmed that they are supported by the College through the process of induction, covering all essential aspects, through shadowing and mentoring by an experienced member of the course team.

**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 College provides appropriate resources to meet student needs. Its strategic plan identifies the need to develop e-learning and blended learning provision and has a resource policy that commits to a strong provision of learning resources. Student Council members claimed that the depth and breadth of learning resources within the on-site library were not sufficient for their needs. The College made a commitment to increase its online book availability and recently installed a software package that allows students access to a wide range of learning resources both on and off-site. At their meeting with the team, students acknowledged a significant improvement and singled out improved online facilities for praise.

2.16 The students express general satisfaction with their study facilities. There is a quiet study space within the College and the entire college has wireless connectivity. There are three computer laboratories available for students and server space is provided for them to store work securely. The College has responded promptly to student requests for additional resources, by, for example, the installation of additional printers and a generous allocation of free printing to each student.

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 College's primary means of communication with prospective students and other stakeholders is the website. This is in the process of transition because of the very recent partnership agreement with Glyndŵr University (see Recent developments, page 3). The current website includes information on the College, its mission, facilities, services for students and programmes, together with information on the admissions processes. Students confirm that the website is easy to navigate, that the information on it is clearly presented and that they are able to find the course for which they are looking. It does, however, contain some inaccuracies (see paragraph 3.6). Students are able to contribute to the development, accuracy and continuous improvement of the website.

3.2 After their arrival at the College, students are provided with a wide range of information in hard copy and electronically. Subsequently, published materials are available in a variety of formats and media, including online platforms and a virtual learning environment. Students state that the virtual learning environment is their primary source of course information. Staff and students confirm that it is used extensively and provides extensive information for students about their course, including course handbooks. However, while it is an essential means of storing and disseminating information, the College acknowledges that it needs further development before it can operate as a fully effective means of teaching and learning.

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

3.3 The College and its awarding bodies and organisations have a clear understanding about the responsibilities of each partner in relation to public information and its devolvement. Staff confirm that they are clear about these arrangements.

3.4 The College works closely with its awarding partners to gain approval for the programme information it wishes to publish and formal arrangements are in place to assure the accuracy of information for validated courses. The awarding bodies and organisations are satisfied with the processes that assure the accuracy and completeness of published information.

3.5 All hard copy and web-based documentation is reviewed and checked for accuracy in the first instance by the College's marketing department and then formally signed off by the College Registrar and Academic Board prior to publication. The College recognises that many of the procedures relating to the accuracy and completeness of public information have been overly dependent on the Registrar and the Principal and plans are underway to address this by the introduction of a new committee. There are clear arrangements for the virtual learning environment. The Librarian is responsible for placing information on the virtual learning environment and the Operations Director is responsible for monitoring the overall content for accuracy and consistency.

3.6 There are, however, some problems concerning the accuracy of the information published by the College, where it needs to take action. For example, the team found a number of errors on the website, including some out-of-date information. The team also found errors and contradictory information in some student module outlines regarding assessment and the weighting of percentage marks.

3.7 The College uses standardised templates from the awarding bodies and organisations for assessment briefs, programme handbooks and programme specifications. They are reviewed annually, but the College recognises that the annual review process of publications and documentation could be strengthened and has already introduced an improved version control system.

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>

Kensington College of Business action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 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>thorough engagement with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 1.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that all staff and student representatives are made aware of the changes from the Academic Infrastructure to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)</p> <p>Cross reference all new processes and procedures against the Quality Code to ensure best practices</p> <p>Designate staff members who will function as Quality</p>	<p>April 2013</p> <p>August 2013</p> <p>November 2012</p>	<p>Registrar</p> <p>Operations Director</p> <p>Facilitator</p> <p>Programme leaders</p>	<p>Annual monitoring reports approved by awarding bodies and organisations</p> <p>Enhanced knowledge and improved contribution by academic and administrative staff at quality meetings</p> <p>Quality Code seminars led by individual staff specialists take place on a fortnightly basis, and are documented in agendas and reports</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p>	<p>Annual monitoring reports</p> <p>Programme specifications in validated programmes</p> <p>Mapping exercises matching the College's academic provision against the Quality Code to ensure it is fit for purpose</p> <p>Academic boards: agendas</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 bodies and organisations.

	Code chapter specialists					and minutes Quality Committee: agendas and minutes Quality Handbook Staff Handbook Agendas and reports on staff Quality Code seminars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the internal moderation on NCFE courses, which produces highly effective reports leading to improvements in practice (paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7)</li> </ul>	<p>Publicise good reports internally for staff development and training</p> <p>Circulate all NCFE reports to academic and administrative staff</p> <p>New template designed to standardise and improve feedback to students</p>	<p>January 2013</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>May 2013</p>	<p>Registrar in consultation with internal verifier and examination managers</p> <p>Programme leaders in consultation with academic staff</p>	<p>Improved design, marking and feedback of assessments</p> <p>Improved and consistent NCFE internal and external verifier reports</p> <p>Use of comprehensive module reports by academic staff across all courses</p> <p>Improved student feedback form</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p> <p>Course Team</p>	<p>Internal verifier reports</p> <p>Examination boards: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Student survey reports</p> <p>External verifier reports</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the provision of examples of exceptionally thorough module level evaluation (paragraph 1.10)</li> </ul>	<p>Dissemination of good practice evident in the stronger examples of module evaluations to all academic staff</p> <p>Implement new design module report template across all courses</p>	<p>April 2013</p> <p>June 2013</p>	<p>Quality Leader</p> <p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Module leaders</p>	<p>Consistent and comprehensive module reports produced by all academic staff across all courses</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p> <p>Exam Board</p>	<p>Moderators' reports</p> <p>Academic Board: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Quality Committee: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Samples of assessed student work</p> <p>External examiners' reports</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the prompt and effective response to issues of concern raised by students (paragraph 2.7)</li> </ul>	<p>Publicise the existence and importance of the Student Council</p> <p>Encourage and maintain student participation in Council affairs</p> <p>Elect and train new members of the Student Council</p> <p>Establish a</p>	<p>December 2012</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p>	<p>Registrar</p> <p>Operations Director</p> <p>Welfare officers</p> <p>Student managers</p> <p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Module leaders</p>	<p>Positive feedback at quality meetings from the Student Council on the College's response to issues of student concerns</p> <p>Students involvement in college decision making with monthly attendance at quality meetings</p> <p>Processes and procedures for student</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p> <p>Course Board</p>	<p>College procedures - Complaints and Appeals</p> <p>College Student Handbook</p> <p>Student survey reports</p> <p>Student-Staff Liaison Committee: agendas and</p>

	transparent mechanism for student representative appointments	December 2012		complaints and appeals are in place and leads to a satisfactory conclusion for parties involved		minutes
	Formalise election procedures for student council	December 2012				Course boards: agendas and minutes
	Hold meetings with student council every month in quality meetings ensuring that agendas are issued	November 2012				Quality Committee: agendas and minutes
	Continuing professional development training of welfare officers to provide pastoral advice and guidance	April 2013				Academic Board: agendas and minutes
	Appoint representatives of student council to all committees except for the Exam Board and the Academic Board	April 2013				Annual monitoring reports
	Review monthly complaints	January 2013				

	<p>summary as a standard item on Quality Committee meeting agendas</p> <p>Keep students informed of responses to issues raised promptly by emails and verbal reporting</p> <p>Document all issues raised by students and actions taken by academic boards and quality committees</p> <p>Review quality improvement plans on a monthly basis</p> <p>Redesign the student feedback (survey) form in consultation with the Student Council</p>	<p>November 2012</p> <p>November 2012</p> <p>November 2012</p> <p>October 2012</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extensive, continuous and accessible support for study skills (paragraph 2.8)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to provide study skills sessions at induction, identifying and arranging English language support</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p>Head of English</p> <p>Operations Director</p> <p>Registrar</p>	<p>Positive feedback from student survey</p> <p>Improved results with a reduction in unfair practice cases</p>	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p>	<p>Course assessment results</p> <p>External examiners'</p>



	<p>where needed</p> <p>Continue to offer Study Skills as non credit bearing modules on specific courses</p> <p>Timetable provided for scheduled or drop-in tutorials and academic support with academic staff</p>	<p>November 2012</p> <p>November 2012</p>	<p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Module leaders/lecturers</p>		<p>Course Team</p> <p>Course Board</p>	<p>reports</p> <p>Student survey reports</p> <p>Student Council reports</p> <p>Course Board: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Samples of assessed student work</p> <p>Annual monitoring reports</p> <p>Public information - material provided to prospective students</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integrated academic and pastoral tutorial support for students (paragraph 2.9)</li> </ul>	<p>Offer tutorials with one-to-one feedback for students who have failed an assessment</p>	<p>November 2012</p>	<p>Operations Director</p> <p>Programme leaders</p>	<p>Enhanced student satisfaction in academic and pastoral support reported by the student council</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality</p>	<p>Student survey reports</p> <p>Quality Committee: agendas and</p>

	<p>Make student support details available on web portal</p> <p>Implement formally scheduled surgery hours and drop-in sessions with academic staff</p> <p>Share knowledge gained among staff</p> <p>Improve the quality of student support</p>	<p>November 2012</p> <p>November 2012</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>July 2013</p>	<p>Module leaders</p> <p>Welfare officers</p>	<p>An integrated support system developed and is working effectively across the College from the academic/ administrative support audit trail</p>	<p>Committee</p> <p>Course Board</p> <p>Course Team</p> <p>Student Council</p>	<p>minutes</p> <p>Course Board: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Student Council: reports</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the provision of examples of detailed, rapid and constructive electronic feedback (paragraph 2.11).</li> </ul>	<p>Online marking to be used by more academic staff</p> <p>Improved online marking facility with second and external markers</p> <p>Staff development workshops on online marking by moderator</p> <p>Provide support and training to academic staff for implementation</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Module leaders</p> <p>Operations Director</p> <p>Information Technology Manager</p> <p>Examination managers</p>	<p>The quality of feedback provided to students about their work is improving, as a consequence of the new system</p> <p>Staff members are developing more consistent approaches to online marking across the College</p> <p>The online marking system is operational and can accommodate feedback provided by moderators as well as</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p> <p>Course Team</p>	<p>External examiner reports</p> <p>Student survey reports</p> <p>Staff survey reports</p> <p>Samples of assessed student work</p> <p>Course Board: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Quality Committee:</p>

				first markers		agendas and minutes  Academic Board: agenda and minutes
<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>strengthen the formal recording of business by the Academic Board and related committees (paragraphs 1.1 and 1.8)</li> </ul>	<p>Document and record minutes and actions for all management meetings</p> <p>Disseminate minutes or summaries of minutes (as appropriate) to staff and students</p> <p>Quality improvement plans of all meetings to be reviewed by the Academic Board every month and minuted</p> <p>Audit of proposed action plans to check on</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>January 2013</p>	<p>Quality Leader</p> <p>Registrar</p> <p>Quality Committee</p>	<p>Minutes with action plans and completion dates</p> <p>All issues raised are considered and addressed</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Annual monitoring reports</p> <p>Academic Board: agendas and minutes</p> <p>Quality Committee: agendas and minutes</p>

	completion  Design new template for minutes and for preparing action plans	October 2012				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that action plans include measurable targets set with realistic dates for achievement (paragraph 1.8)</li> </ul>	Design new template for minutes and for preparing action plans	October 2012	Quality Leader Registrar Operations Director Programme leaders	Monthly audit of action plans shows timely and appropriate completion of action plans	Principal Academic Board Quality Leader Quality Committee	Annual Review  Joint Board of Studies: agendas and minutes  Quality Committee: agendas and minutes  Academic Board: standard item on agendas and results reported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that feedback to students is explicitly linked to achievement of the learning outcomes (paragraph 2.11)</li> </ul>	Design new student assessment feedback forms  Review effectiveness of the new forms	April 2013  September 2013	Quality Committee  Programme leaders Module leaders	Improved external examiners' reports  New feedback form has been disseminated to staff and used consistently on all programmes across the	Academic Board  Quality Committee Course Board	Annual monitoring reports  Documented staff feedback on the utility of the new forms

	Provide workshops to disseminate information and facilitate staff knowledge in this area	May 2013		College		Student survey reports External examiners' reports Moderators' reports Samples of assessed student work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all published information is consistent and accurate in all media (paragraph 3.6).</li> </ul>	Update the College website on a quarterly basis, ensuring that information is accurate, up to date and trustworthy	April 2013	Registrar	Student feedback on information provided by the College is positive	Principal	Annual Monitoring Review
	Formalise procedures for checking and publishing documentation published in hard and soft versions	November 2012	Operations Director Programme leaders (academic information) Quality Leader – quality documentation, including College policies and procedures	An information policy previously developed made operational Staff, student, programme and quality handbooks are checked/edited for accuracy on a termly basis	Academic Board Quality Committee	Student survey reports Course Board: agendas and minutes
	Devise an improved formal template for signing off	November 2012	Librarian and Information Technology manager	Version control is operating for all documents An accurate public information review	Course Board	Results of reviews of information management undertaken by the Quality Leader

	Map College Information Management procedures against the Quality Code, Part C: Information about higher education provision to ensure compliance in this area	April 2013		calendar is being used to chart progress in the College		
<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>continue to provide additional support for students undertaking the dissertation stage of the MSc Computing (paragraph 1.9).</li> </ul>	Scheduled or drop-in tutorials and academic support	December 2013	MSc Course Leader	<p>10% improvement in completion rate of MSc dissertation results</p> <p>More time allocated for student feedback by dissertation supervisors resulting in more positive feedback from student surveys</p> <p>Selection of specific MSc pathway available</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality Committee</p> <p>Exam Board</p> <p>Course Board</p>	<p>Annual Monitoring Report</p> <p>MSc Computing dissertation external examiners' reports</p> <p>Student survey results</p> <p>Examination boards: agendas and minutes</p>

						Academic boards: agendas and minutes  Quality Committee: agendas and minutes
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## About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/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.

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