



London College of Accountancy Ltd t/a LCA Business School

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

October 2012

Key findings about London College of Accountancy Ltd t/a LCA Business School

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in October 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 Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Anglia Ruskin University 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 organisation.

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 effective engagement of staff in the design and development of assessments, and syllabus content, with clear regard to external reference points (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.4)
- the role of employability in the curriculum (paragraphs 2.8 and 3.3).

Recommendations

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

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

- articulate its policies and procedures for programme annual monitoring and include these in the quality handbook (paragraph 1.4)
- discuss with Anglia Ruskin University the benefits of external examiners, indicating when their comments relate specifically to College provision (paragraph 1.8)
- introduce a policy and formal approval system for managing the oversight of public information (paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at London College of Accountancy Ltd t/a LCA Business School (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 Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Wales. The review was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite, Professor Geoffrey Elliott, Mr Hayiath Qureshi (reviewers), and Mrs Freda Richardson (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included partnership agreements, validation reports, student feedback summaries, moderation reports, meetings with staff and students, and the College's strategic plan.

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

- subject benchmark statements
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*)
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants programme details.

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

The London College of Accountancy Ltd t/a LCA Business School (the College) was established in 2000 to provide higher education for overseas students. The College considers itself to be an educationally focused and research-informed institution and has a mission which aims to place students at the heart of what they do. The College initially offered professional accountancy programmes only; in 2004, this was augmented to include a Master's in Business Administration delivered through a partnership agreement with Heriot-Watt University. This agreement lasted until 2007 when an academic relationship with Anglia Ruskin University commenced. The College now offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in business and management validated by Anglia Ruskin University. In 2011, the College also commenced delivery of three undergraduate programmes validated by the University of Wales. However, this partnership is not continuing and the College will not be recruiting to these programmes from 2012. There is currently one cohort of students running out on the awards of the University of Wales.

The College operates from a single campus in Charterhouse Street, London EC1, that has recently been refurbished to a high standard. There are currently 1,601 students enrolled with the College. Of these, 224 are part-time students enrolled on the ACCA professional programme and the remainder are full-time students studying programmes across all three awarding bodies and organisation. There have been recent efforts to attract home as well as overseas students and the ratio of overseas to home students is now approximately 9:1.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding bodies and organisation, with numbers of students in brackets:

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants Professional programme (full and part-time) (617)

Anglia Ruskin University

- BSc (Hons) Business and Human Resource Management (level 4) (3)
- BSc (Hons) Business and Law (level 4) (6)
- BSc (Hons) Business and Marketing (level 4) (8)
- BSc (Hons) Business and Tourism (level 4) (2)
- BSc (Hons) E-Business and Entrepreneurship (level 4) (1)
- BSc (Hons) International Business Management (level 4) (54)
- BSc (Hons) Law and Accounting (level 4) (4)
- BSc (Hons) Finance and Accounting (51)
- BA (Hons) Applied Accounting (levels 5 and 6) (278)
- BA (Hons) International Business Management (levels 5 and 6) (232)
- MBA International (171)
- MSc Business and Management (99)
- MSc International Accounting and Finance (7)

University of Wales

- BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance (41)
- BSc (Hons) Business and Law (13)
- BSc (Hons) Business Studies (14)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The responsibilities delegated to the College vary between the awarding bodies and organisation. Both universities delegate responsibility for setting, first marking and internal verification of assessments and giving feedback to students on assignments. The College has no responsibility for ACCA summative assessments, which are all based on a final external examination. For university programmes, external examiners are appointed and regulated by the policies of the relevant university. The College is responsible for reviewing and responding to monitoring reports and module evaluations, and for developing staff higher education teaching and assessing skills. External moderation and second marking is shared with university partners. For the ACCA programme, all summative assessment is through the external exam and, therefore, the responsibility for all marking and moderation lies with the awarding organisation.

Recent developments

The College has recently entered into a joint venture agreement with Anglia Ruskin University, as a result of which the College is advertised and organisationally structured as a branch campus of this university. A review in March 2012 resulted in the addition of several new programmes validated by Anglia Ruskin University and, with effect from March 2012, all new overseas students are sponsored by this university. With the exception of students completing University of Wales awards, all existing students have been transferred to Anglia Ruskin University sponsorship and are registered at the University as well as at the College; this includes students studying the ACCA professional programme. As part of the new agreement, senior managers from Anglia Ruskin University sit on the College's Board of Directors and the College's Head of International Admissions, Admissions Support Officer

and Head of Compliance are employed by Anglia Ruskin University and based at the College. The College has also taken the opportunity to rationalise and simplify its management structure. This now includes a Principal, Director of Resources and two programme directors. Committee structures have also been simplified with the inclusion of an Academic Board, which reports through the Management Board to the Board of Directors.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Students were informed about the purpose and nature of this review at a Student Council meeting. They were advised of the opportunity for them to provide a submission and of the importance of ensuring that it represented the views of the student population across all three awarding partners. They were alerted to the guidance provided for them on the QAA website and encouraged to approach their academic director or the Principal for access to any information or resources that they required in order to complete the submission. The submission was entirely the students' work and was shared with the College prior to submission. It was helpful in supporting the evidence provided in the self-evaluation, discussions that took place in the student meeting and documentary evidence provided by the College.

Detailed findings about London College of Accountancy Ltd t/a LCA Business School

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has a small senior management team and has recently developed a revised management structure that is operating effectively. The Management Board comprises the Chairman, a newly created post of Principal, and the Resources Director. This committee reports to the Board of Directors, which was established in 2011 and includes senior managers from Anglia Ruskin University. The Principal holds ultimate responsibility for standards, and is supported by two programme directors who manage undergraduate and postgraduate plus professional provision respectively. Programme directors have a wide range of responsibilities, including academic leadership and line management; liaison with validating bodies to ensure programmes are delivered in line with their requirements; overseeing assessment practices; liaison with external examiners; and preparation of annual review reports. Processes for managing standards are relatively new and the College is still in the process of evaluating their effectiveness.

1.2 The committee structure also includes a newly established Academic Board. This considers and approves the College annual report and plan, and receives the reports of the two committees that oversee the delivery of university-validated programmes: the Course Management Committee for Anglia Ruskin University; and the Joint Board of Studies and the Staff Student Liaison Committee for the University of Wales. There is also a Student Council, and a new Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee. The Academic Board approves any new or revised academic policies, such as the assessment feedback strategy, and will approve the current draft quality handbook.

1.3 All programmes are subject to annual monitoring. The College piloted an internally devised system in 2010-11. Following this, a revised process utilising the Anglia Ruskin University reporting template was introduced in 2012 to meet the requirements of all awarding bodies. This entails preparation of an annual report and enhancement plan for approval by the Academic Board in the autumn term. The process for 2011-12 had not been completed at the time of the review visit, but staff confirmed that the new process is being implemented and the enhancement plan is being updated.

1.4 The oversight of higher education is effective. Responsibilities are clearly identified, and awarding partners are satisfied with the arrangements made in the College. Staff are clear on responsibilities for action at the various levels of the College. External examiners appointed by the awarding partners consistently indicate that the College's assessment practices are fair and sound. Responsibilities for quality matters are set out in the draft quality handbook, but this does not include the processes for annual review and monitoring. It is desirable that the College articulates its policies and procedures for programme annual monitoring and includes these in the quality handbook.

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

1.5 The College makes effective use of external reference points in the management of standards. It has utilised the reference points provided by the awarding bodies and organisation and it has also used the Academic Infrastructure. The College has prepared

programme specifications for all university programmes and these meet the requirements of the partners and reflect QAA guidelines.

1.6 Programmes have been devised to reflect sector and professional benchmarks, the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements, and the standards laid down by ACCA for professional programmes. Quality policies and practices are informed by reference to the *Code of practice* and have been mapped onto relevant sections of it. Staff development has been undertaken to support staff in engaging with external reference points; this includes participation in awarding organisation briefings and in-house meetings.

1.7 The College has a close working relationship with its main awarding body (Anglia Ruskin University), which enables regular engagement with the requirements of the higher education sector. External academics sit on the Academic Board and this further supports engagement with and understanding of the broader higher education sector. Many teaching staff are members of professional bodies that, through their continuous professional development, require members to be up to date with their standards. In addition, several lecturers have current or previous experience as external examiners, in most cases for their professional body.

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

1.8 External moderation is undertaken by external examiners appointed by both university partners. The external examiners attend the assessment boards operated by the relevant university and provide a verbal report followed by a written report, which assist the College to assure academic standards. The College is not required by the awarding bodies to respond formally to external examiner reports, but it is responsible for addressing any recommended actions. To this end, the relevant programme director scrutinises the reports and notes matters requiring action. The College is formalising this process so that reports are tabled at course management committees and reviewed as part of annual monitoring. For Anglia Ruskin University, programmes and modules validated for delivery at the College are not offered at the University. However, external examiner reports are not always clear on the programmes and modules to which they relate, as reports do not always specify module names and in some cases refer to broad subject disciplines. It is desirable that the College discusses with Anglia Ruskin University the benefits of external examiners, indicating when their comments relate specifically to College provision.

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 organisation.

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 arrangements for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The management and committee structures explained in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 also apply to quality of learning opportunities. There is clear evidence that the Principal, through Academic Board, has overall oversight of quality as well as standards within the College. The governance and strategic direction of the joint venture between the College and Anglia Ruskin University resides with the Board of Directors. Programme directors oversee operational management of the quality of learning opportunities for all

programmes. For Anglia Ruskin University programmes, staff and students are actively engaged in the process through the Course Management Committee. The management and operation of learning opportunities for University of Wales programmes takes place through the University of Wales moderator and the Joint Board of Studies.

2.2 The arrangements for monitoring and reporting learning opportunities are appropriate. The College has updated its annual monitoring processes to provide greater strategic oversight of all higher education provision. Annual programme monitoring and progression monitoring is evident in the College's committee reporting structures. The Academic Board and the Course Management Committee include student representatives and the College has further enhanced its approach to student representation through the establishment of the Student Council. Student feedback is also gathered through questionnaires and monthly meetings with student representatives, and responded to appropriately.

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

2.3 There is effective engagement with external reference points, particularly in course design. Academic monitoring and review of courses and student progression takes place through the annual programme monitoring processes. There is engagement with parts of the Academic Infrastructure relevant to the management of learning opportunities. The College cited examples of mapping to the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements within its recent review and reapproval of programmes with Anglia Ruskin University. The reapproval report included mapping of programme learning outcomes to relevant subject benchmark statements and these are also cross-referenced in programme specifications.

2.4 The College has gone through a process of programme design and reapproval to develop curricula that are professionally focused and with an emphasis on employability. The approval report noted the breadth of experience and practice of tutors at the College and commended the introduction of assignments within the assessment strategy. Students confirmed that the curriculum content and use of real life case studies in teaching and learning and in assessment supports the development of employability skills. The effective engagement of staff in the design and development of assessments, and syllabus content, with clear regard to external reference points is evidence of good practice.

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

2.5 Overall, external examiners report positively on the quality of learning opportunities and generally commend the commitment and engagement of staff on modules. Meetings with staff provided evidence that there are formal and informal opportunities for academic staff to reflect on teaching and learning practice, particularly through staff involvement at Anglia Ruskin University examination boards.

2.6 The College has a learning and teaching strategy that is embedded in formal and informal academic staff development and appraisal processes. It informs the College's approach on all the academic and professional programmes and this is tied into the staff development policy and academic appraisal scheme of the College. At the time of the review, the College was in the process of updating the quality enhancement plan with defined and explicit actions and outcomes. This plan has been completed as the first stage in the new annual monitoring process activated for 2011-12.

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

2.7 The students expressed overall satisfaction with the level and standards of the learning opportunities at the College. They confirmed that the welcome and induction processes were effective and enabled them to settle into their programme of study and that academic documentation used to support induction was helpful. Students stated that they receive useful feedback on assignments that is related to learning outcomes, and that there are many and various opportunities to raise academic and pastoral issues with staff.

2.8 The students were clear on the reasons for choosing the College as a place of study and commended the professional focus of programme content and the expertise and professional status of tutors. They confirmed that the College has a clear focus on employability, citing the online careers management service, the high achievers award and opportunities to work with employers and gain internships as examples of the effectiveness of this. Undergraduate students on Anglia Ruskin University-validated programmes stated that the business skills module is helpful in developing their employability skills. They consider that the College has created a teaching programme that advances their knowledge and understanding of business and of employment opportunities, as well as their subject knowledge. The role of employability in the curriculum is evidence of good practice.

2.9 Staff and students confirmed that access to academic and pastoral support is effective, with dedicated roles including the student adviser and student welfare officer. The College uses the Course Management Committee and the Staff Student Liaison Committee forums as mechanisms for addressing issues of learning, teaching and student experience, and responds quickly to student complaints and concerns of all types. Students confirmed that they have opportunities to raise issues through questionnaire surveys, the Student Council and informally in discussions with tutors. They confirmed that issues are responded to quickly and that student advisers are helpful in supporting their needs. Issues that have been raised by students and dealt with promptly by the College include changes to the delivery model for University of Wales programmes and resolving problems with logging on to the Anglia Ruskin University digital library.

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

2.10 Staff development is effective in supporting the quality of learning opportunities. All lecturers are expected to participate in staff development activities held at the College. Staff development needs are identified through a range of activities, including the annual review process, staff appraisal, student feedback, peer observation, curriculum planning, and requests from individual members of staff. Recent examples of internal staff development include mentoring workshops on assessment strategies, curriculum planning, quality in curriculum delivery, the role and responsibilities of tutors, improving student progression, and customer service in student administration.

2.11 The annual appraisal scheme is in its early stages of implementation and was piloted for a small number of teaching staff from January 2011, and fully implemented for all staff from January 2012. The College uses the same method of appraisal for full-time and part-time staff and this helps to ensure consistency of the student learning experience. It also operates an academic staff mentoring scheme and a peer observation programme to support new and existing staff and to ensure all staff are clear on the College's approach to learning and teaching.

2.12 Good practice is shared through a number of processes, largely informal. The recent appointment of academic directors has enhanced discussion across programme teams through regular staff meetings, and staff development on assessment has been

undertaken. The terms of reference of Academic Board include exchange and dissemination of information on academic policies and innovation. The implementation of the new annual monitoring process, which includes an enhancement plan, presents a further opportunity for identifying and sharing good practice. Lecturers delivering modules at the same level of learning within a pathway work together as a team to ensure that students experience a balanced range of teaching styles and methods. A significant number of part-time staff also teach at other higher education institutions, including the main partner, Anglia Ruskin University, and this further facilitates the sharing of good practice in learning and teaching.

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

2.13 Students expressed satisfaction with the resources used to support learning and teaching. They have access to facilities for learning at the relevant awarding institution as well as at the College. The Anglia Ruskin University institutional review report, March 2012, commended the quality of learning support facilities at the College. Students and staff indicated that they use College and awarding body resources and facilities as part of their learning and teaching experience. A small library, providing multiple copies of the main textbooks and access to computers, opened at the Charterhouse campus in July 2011 and is in the early stages of development. All students are provided with core textbooks for each module at the start of their programme and classrooms have computer-driven visual aid equipment and sound enhancement technology.

2.14 The students experience a professionally focused physical environment and good educational resources at the Charterhouse campus. These resources are under regular review and adaptation in response to operational needs and priorities. The Director of Resources manages resource allocation in conjunction with the Principal and programme directors. The resources to support learning and teaching are extensive, accessible, and generally of a high quality. They are fit for the purpose of delivering the awarding bodies and organisation needs and requirements and the College's educational mission and vision.

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 primary source of programme information for prospective students is the College's website. There are two separate websites supported by two prospectuses catering for overseas and home students. There is some inconsistency and lack of clarity between the two websites. For example, it is not immediately clear which website is aimed at which external market and this is potentially confusing for prospective students seeking relevant information on possible programmes of study. The College is aware of the difficulty in terms of managing the contents of both websites and is planning to merge them before the end of the year.

3.2 The College has a range of well presented handbooks and module guides for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. Students confirmed that they receive

a programme handbook, a student handbook and module guides. Their programme handbooks contain essential information on programme content, assessment methods and grading; the student handbook contains information on academic regulations, facilities and support services. All handbooks are accurate and complete, and are provided to students in hard copy at the start of their programmes. The student handbook and module guides are also available online on the student portal.

3.3 Lecture schedules and learning materials are also made available on the student portal. Students reported that the information supplied is appropriate and useful. The College makes effective use of the full range of electronically based media, including social media, to communicate with staff and students. Students confirmed that the online career management resources are useful and beneficial in supporting the development of employability skills and helping them prepare and plan their career.

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

3.4 The College has no formal policy for managing public information, but staff are clear on the processes for assuring its accuracy and completeness. The Principal has overall responsibility for public information. Programme information is compiled by tutors and checked for accuracy by the programme directors for programme-specific content and by the admissions managers for recruitment and admissions information. Publicity material produced by the College and its agents overseas is approved and signed off by the relevant awarding body or organisation. The College undertook a comprehensive review of public information in 2011 and identified improvements to be made.

3.5 The marketing department is initially responsible for the design and content of the websites and the prospectuses. The resources department has overall responsibility for the quality of information aimed at the overseas market and the Head of UK Admissions has this responsibility for the home market. While similar processes are used and programme level information is common, processes are informal and not documented. In addition, there is no clear audit trail to ensure consistency of information published in different contexts. It is desirable that the College introduces a policy and formal approval system for managing the oversight of public information.

3.6 Students confirmed that they were able to make informed choices on study options based on the marketing materials provided by the College. A package (including the prospectus and an application form) is sent out in response to each enquiry and, where possible, students are given the opportunity to tour the College and talk to staff. Students stated that the information provided before they started accurately reflected their programme of study and their learning experience at the College.

3.7 Measures are in place to ensure that students receive up-to-date and reliable information. There is no standard template for handbooks, but all include clear guidance on academic regulations and details of programme learning outcomes and support. Students confirmed that they receive clear guidance in their handbooks on intended learning outcomes and grading criteria, procedures for complaints and appeals, and penalties for late submission and academic misconduct. They confirmed the accuracy and consistency of all types of information presented to them on their programme.

<p>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.</p>

Action plan³

London College of Accountancy Ltd t/a LCA Business School action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight October 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective engagement of staff in the design and development of assessments, and syllabus content, with clear regard to external reference points (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.4) 	Continue the staff development sessions on assessment and ensure that any new staff are made aware of the approach Evaluate the impact of these measures	July 2013	Programme directors	Positive evaluation of the impact of staff development sessions Positive feedback at REO annual monitoring visit Positive feedback from students, internal moderators and external examiners	Academic Board July 2013	Through the College annual monitoring
	Ensure any revisions to external reference points (including the new UK Quality Code	September 2013	Programme directors	Positive feedback at REO annual monitoring visit	Academic Board November 2013	Through the College annual monitoring

³ 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 organisation.

	for Higher Education) are noted and implications addressed in policies and processes			Increased level of staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure/Quality Code		
	Monitor the effectiveness of the revised assessment strategy	January 2013	Programme Director (postgraduate and professional)	Positive feedback from external examiners Updates to policies and procedures in the Quality Handbook	Academic Board March 2013	Through staff and student feedback and evaluation of student performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role of employability in the curriculum (paragraphs 2.8 and 3.3). 	Sustain the high achievers award initiative	September 2013	Principal and programme directors	Increase in number of students receiving an award for the first time	Academic Board July 2013	Through evaluation of student performance and retention
	Extend the internship initiative	September 2013	Principal and programme directors	Increase in the number of organisations involved in the scheme/number of students in post	Academic Board July 2013	Through evaluation of the initiative participants
	Continue to enhance the career	September 2013	Principal and programme	Increased use by students and	Academic Board 2013	Through student feedback

	management resources		directors	positive student feedback		
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> articulate its policies and procedures for programme annual monitoring and include these in the quality handbook (paragraph 1.4) 	<p>Articulation of the annual monitoring process and ongoing implementation</p> <p>Incorporation into the Quality Handbook</p>	<p>November 2013</p> <p>March 2013</p>	<p>Programme Director (undergraduate)</p> <p>Programme Director (undergraduate)</p>	<p>Existence of a written process and ongoing implementation of the process</p> <p>Final Quality Handbook approved by the Academic Board</p> <p>Positive feedback from users</p>	<p>Academic Board November 2012</p> <p>Academic Board March 2013</p>	<p>Monitor the College annual monitoring process and make enhancements where relevant</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss with Anglia Ruskin University the benefits of external examiners, indicating when their comments relate specifically to College provision (paragraph 1.8) 	Contact the Head of Quality at Anglia Ruskin University and explore the possibility of ensuring external examiners indicate clearly where comments relate to College provision	March 2013	Principal	External examiner reports clearly indicate comments relevant specifically to College provision	Academic Board July 2013/ November 2013	Review of external examiners reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a policy and formal approval system for managing the oversight of public 	Articulate and implement a policy for managing the oversight of public information	March 2013	Principal and Director of Resources	Approval of a policy by the Academic Board and inclusion in the Quality Handbook	Academic Board March 2013	Review of all public information to ensure it meets the requirements of the policy

information (paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5).	Include in the Quality Handbook	March 2013	Programme Director (undergraduate)	Improvement in the quality of public information		
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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.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at:
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. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook⁴](#)

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:

⁴ 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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