



# **Interlink College of Technology & Business Studies**

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

November 2012

## Key findings about Interlink College of Technology & Business Studies

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in November 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 Edexcel, the University of the West of England, Bristol, the Association of Business Executives, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, the Institute of Commercial Management, Education Development International, NCFE, and The Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management.

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 body 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**:

- a formal mechanism to discuss and disseminate good practice and to facilitate staff development (paragraph 1.8)
- robust recruitment processes that take into account all aspects of potential students' readiness and motivation for study (paragraph 2.2)
- strong commitment to student welfare and support (paragraph 2.13).

### 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 annual monitoring process so as to identify all points of strength and weakness and to ensure that good practice is shared across programmes (paragraph 1.4).

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

- review internal verification processes to enhance the consistency of feedback on student work (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.5)
- develop overarching programme specifications for all programmes (paragraphs 2.6 and 3.3)
- strengthen teaching observation procedures (paragraph 2.9)
- establish clear lines of responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information (paragraph 3.6).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Interlink College of Technology & Business Studies (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 Edexcel, the University of the West of England, Bristol, the Association of Business Executives, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, the Institute of Commercial Management, Education Development International, NCFE, and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management. The review was carried out by Erika Beumer, Gary Hargreaves, Trudy Stiles (reviewers), and David Taylor (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider, documentation from the awarding body and organisations, and meetings with staff, students and representatives of two of the awarding organisations.

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

- guidelines and programme specifications provided by the awarding body and organisations
- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

Interlink College of Technology & Business Studies (the College) was founded in 1995 and operates under the auspices of the Interlink Group and the Interlink Paradise foundation International, a registered charity. In its early years, it offered programmes of study at levels 1-3 on the National Qualifications Framework, but in 2007 made a strategic decision to concentrate on programmes at level 4 and above.

The College is located in a converted industrial building in East London. The total student body at the time of the review visit consisted of 79 students studying on a range of qualifications in the general areas of business, health and social care, and tourism. Twenty students were enrolled on a one-year BSc top-up programme in partnership with Management Development Partnership and validated by the University of the West of England, Bristol, introduced in September 2012.

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

### Edexcel

- Higher National Diploma in Health and Social Care (level 5) (8)
- Higher National Diploma in Business (level 5) (6)
- Higher National Diploma in Computing and System Development (level 5) (5)
- Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management (level 5) (6)

---

<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).

- Higher National Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (level 5) (0)
- Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (level 7) (0)

**University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE)**

- BSc in Business Management (5)
- BSc in Travel and Tourism Management (10)
- BSc in Health and Social Care Management (5)

**Association of Business Executives (ABE)**

- Diploma in Leadership and Management in the Health and Social Care Sector (level 7) (5)
- Diploma in Business Computing (level 7) (0)
- Diploma in Information Systems (level 7) (0)
- Diploma in Enterprise Networks (level 7) (2)
- Diploma in International Human Resource Management (level 7) (16)

**Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)**

- ACCA Membership (8)

**Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH)**

- Diploma in Hotel Management (level 4) (0)
- Advanced Diploma in Hotel Management (level 5) (0)

**Institute of Commercial Management (IOCM)**

- Diploma in Business Management (levels 4-6) (0)

**Education Development International (EDI)**

- Diploma in Health and Social Care (level 5) (0)
- Diploma in Hospitality Management (level 4) (0)
- Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Procedures and Practice (level 4) (0)

**NCFE**

- Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Procedures and Practice (level 4) (0)

**Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management**

- Professional Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (level 4) (0)
- Professional Higher Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (level 5) (3)

**The provider's stated responsibilities**

The College is responsible for the recruitment and admission of students, provision of teaching and other learning resources, and for the development, where appropriate, of assignment briefs. It conducts internal verification of assessed work in accordance with awarding body and organisations' requirements. The College and its awarding body and organisations share responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards.

## **Recent developments**

The College has recently introduced a one-year top-up bachelor's programme in association with Management Development Partnership and the University of the West of England, Bristol, and intends to continue to expand in this area. It also intends to expand its overall student numbers, following a dip caused by the temporary suspension of its UK Border Agency licence.

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

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. During the visit, the team had an extremely lively and helpful meeting with a large group of students representing most of the programmes offered at the College.

## Detailed findings about Interlink College of Technology & Business Studies

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College has effective processes in place to manage academic standards and to fulfil the responsibilities delegated to it by its awarding body and organisations, which, in most but not all cases, include responsibility for the design and initial assessment of assignments. The Academic Board, composed of the Principal, Registrar, Dean, Director of Studies, internal verifiers and programme leaders, takes overall responsibility for the management of academic standards. It meets three times per term.

1.2 Within the Academic Board, responsibilities for the management of academic standards are clearly defined. Roles and responsibilities of staff are outlined in staff contracts and the Staff Policies handbook. The College has well defined policies and procedures, including admissions, accreditation of prior learning and student appeals. Many of the policies and procedures were developed during the period that the College focused on level 3 awards.

1.3 The College conducts regular reviews of individual modules and programmes of study. Programme leaders are responsible to the Academic Board for coordination of these reviews. The teachers for each module within the programme ask the students to complete evaluation forms. These are then passed on to the programme leader. The programme leader prepares an annual report for the whole programme, incorporating the module evaluation and student feedback, assessment results and examination results where appropriate.

1.4 Annual monitoring of programmes fulfils the requirements of the awarding body and organisations, and covers strengths as well as areas of concern, although the team noted some inconsistency of approach between the various programme reports. Annual reports for all programmes currently taught are discussed at Academic Board meetings, and actions are then agreed. The programme teams and leaders respond to external reports both informally and through their annual reports, but their responses are not always contained in the annual monitoring report. Action points from awarding organisation and external verifier visits are inconsistently noted in the annual reports. It is considered advisable that the College strengthens the annual monitoring process so as to identify all points of strength and weakness and to ensure that good practice is shared across programmes.

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

1.5 The College makes effective use of external reference points to ensure the management of academic standards. The awarding body and organisations provide clear guidelines, programme specifications and intended learning outcomes that are used by the College to deliver the curriculum and manage assessment.

1.6 The College has recently taken steps to familiarise staff with the external reference points that it uses, for example the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). The Registrar is responsible for considering relevant documents and disseminating the information to the rest of the

academic staff. A number of staff members also work as examiners for other awarding organisations and are able to share their knowledge with colleagues. A glossary of key terms is given to academic staff members as part of their induction.

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

1.7 All programmes offered by the College are subject to external verification by the awarding body and organisations. External verifiers review student work and make recommendations on overall standards and on administrative procedures. These processes run smoothly and ensure the maintenance of appropriate academic standards. Representatives of two awarding organisations who participated in the review visit confirmed that this is the case. Action points that arise from external verification are incorporated into the annual report, with responsibility for monitoring implementation resting with the Registrar. As indicated in paragraph 1.4, there are some areas of the annual monitoring process that require to be strengthened.

1.8 Findings from external verification visits are shared with staff and are discussed at informal 'lunch and learn' sessions held on a monthly or bimonthly basis. These meetings are effective in disseminating good practice. This mechanism to discuss and disseminate good practice and to facilitate staff development is considered to be 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 body 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 College's responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those described in paragraphs 1.1-1.2. The College management demonstrates a commitment to providing a high-quality learning experience for their students.

2.2 Student recruitment and admissions processes are robust and conducted with integrity. All recruitment and admissions are the responsibility of the College, and, where required, approval is sought from the appropriate awarding body or organisation. There is evidence of the careful scrutiny of individual applications to ensure a good fit between the applicant and programme; and to ensure that students had the appropriate entrance requirements, appropriate motivation and readiness for study, and that they understood the requirements of the programme they were applying for. The scrupulous admissions procedures are good practice.

2.3 Where assessment is by means of written assignments, the College is generally responsible for devising them and for the initial assessment. The external verifier report from the Association of Business Practitioners (affiliated to the Association of Business Executives) noted a systematic improvement in internal verification and the quality of assessment, and this was also reflected in student satisfaction. Where weaknesses are identified, there is clear evidence that the College takes remedial action. Nevertheless, the awarding body and organisations report the need for more consistent and overarching internal verification of student work. It is recommended as desirable that cross-programme

internal verification should be systematised in order to aid and enhance learning and improve the consistency of feedback to students (see also paragraph 2.5).

2.4 Documentation to support assessment is consistent and is monitored by programme leaders, the Registrar and the Vice Principal, including during teaching observation. Students were very clear about their responsibilities in submitting formative and summative work. The policy on the late submission of work is effective and clearly understood by students.

2.5 Feedback on student work was variable: in some cases it was detailed, and in others cursory, although students reported that they found assignment-based assessment feedback useful and positive. The College still has some way to go to meet its own targets of three weeks for the return of assessed student work. A more consistent approach should be adopted in providing feedback both on student work and in relation to intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria (see also paragraph 2.3).

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

2.6 The College management indicated that they intend to engage more directly with the Academic Infrastructure. The absence of centre-devised programme specifications, particularly for Edexcel Higher National programmes, is a gap that requires corrective action. It is desirable that the College provides centre-devised overarching programme specifications for all its higher education programmes, in line with the *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*.

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

2.7 Teaching staff are well qualified and have substantive professional and education experience. Most have appropriate teaching qualifications or are working towards them as a requirement and as a matter of College policy. Recent courses taken by staff members included Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector and Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector. If student numbers expand beyond current levels, the College will need to consider whether its current staff provision is adequate or needs to be expanded.

2.8 The College has recently introduced a teaching and learning strategy that outlines expectations of the College for all staff. Each department is required to develop an action plan that includes identifying and disseminating good practice, engaging with the quality of education and delivering and embedding learning technologies. The strategy is not formally connected to monitoring processes such as programme review. While a range of mechanisms exist to provide evidence for improvement, for example teaching observation, schemes of work, and internal verification, there is as yet no clear process to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy or to drive improvement.

2.9 Teaching observation by colleagues takes place at least twice, at the beginning and towards the end of each module. Although teaching observation at the College is well documented and has the potential to be useful, it does not explicitly align with the teaching and learning strategy (see paragraph 2.8). Nor is it clear how teaching observation informs good practice dissemination, internal programme monitoring, appraisal and staff development. It is desirable that the College aligns its teaching and learning strategy and teaching observation procedures in order to provide clear and measurable outcomes and to maximise the developmental benefit for the individual teacher and the College as a whole.

2.10 Students are generally positive about teaching, learning and assessment provision, and indicated that they are consistently involved through a range of activities. Module reviews are undertaken by students and these are then reported, and corrective actions cited during programme annual monitoring. Student involvement in assignment design provides differentiation of their needs.

2.11 Staff recruitment is informed by awarding body and organisation requirements and their prior approval, if required. Initially, staff are sought internally. External candidates have to undergo a selection process that includes preparation of teaching plans and materials as part of the appointment process. Further responsibilities are outlined in the job descriptions, staff contracts and the Staff Policies handbook.

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

2.12 The College provides an open, caring, progressive, personalised and enriching environment for learning and individual development. Students particularly noted: the respect and tolerance, the multi-faith approach demonstrated by staff, and a collegiate and principled approach to College life.

2.13 Students were positive about the support they received both pre-entry and on course. They cited a number of occasions when the College staff, including the Principal and Registrar, had taken direct and immediate action to support their academic and personal welfare. Students are regularly consulted about the support they receive. In addition, the College provides a suggestions box. Academic Board and annual monitoring reports also comment and provide updates on support. Additional support is provided by the Student Welfare Officer. The measures taken by the College to support student welfare and learning constitute good practice.

2.14 Students are able to monitor their own progress, including through the Learner Review, a form completed by students at the beginning of each module. Attendance and assessment outcomes are maintained online. Confidential personal records are excluded from the main student record system. Annual programme monitoring reports consider recruitment and progression statistics, for example the report for the Diploma in Leadership and Management in the Health and Social Care Sector (awarded by the Association of Business Executives) included a need to consider a more diverse approach to recruitment.

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

2.15 The College's staff development policy is outlined in the staff handbook. Staff development records are monitored effectively for all staff. These contain a statement of the scope of each continuous professional development event or activity, for example teaching and learning or subject specialism. Staff meet regularly at 'lunch and learn' meetings, where they receive college-wide updates and have opportunities to share good practice. Teaching staff either hold teaching qualifications or are working towards them. The majority of staff hold professional body membership, where they are required to document and update their individual professional development as part of their membership agreement.

2.16 Staff induction is outlined in the Staff Policies handbook and the job description. The induction is designed to familiarise staff with the College environment and with their colleagues, and provides important information, including terms of employment, health and safety, College policies and procedures, and facilities available to employees.

2.17 The mechanism for sharing good practice is largely through close and regular contact on a day-to-day basis. Staff who have been on training courses or have become aware of new developments share their knowledge through 'lunch and learn' sessions (see paragraph 1.8), or through programme or annual monitoring reports.

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

2.18 The College has invested in new technology, including an e-library and anti-plagiarism software. The replacement and updating of current programme textbooks, which is a student concern, is recognised as an ongoing issue and the e-library is being used to address these concerns alongside regular book purchasing. The College has a clear policy to ensure that students have all the materials required for their programmes of study. Besides the resources available at the College, students have access to other libraries locally and elsewhere in London. Students confirmed that the facilities are adequate to meet their needs.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

### **3 Public information**

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

3.1 The responsibilities of the College and its awarding body and organisations with respect to public information are clearly demarcated. The College has delegated responsibility for publishing a range of information through its website, intranet and in hard copy about its higher education provision, including a downloadable prospectus and a printed student handbook. It has shared responsibility for programme and module information for students. The awarding body and organisations provide the syllabus and the module outlines; the College is responsible for publishing the course handbook that includes module definitions, learning outcomes and entry requirements determined by the awarding body or organisation, together with College information in support of learning. Students found the website useful in helping them decide which course to study and they confirmed that the information was relevant, helpful and accurate.

3.2 Besides the prospectus and application form, the College website, which is easy to use and navigate, contains a range of helpful information on courses offered. There is a section on college-level student services, including accommodation advice, the initial assessment process, teaching methods, personal tutors and English language support, and a link to the UK Border Agency website. Student testimonials on opportunities provided by the College describe some of the enrichment activities. The prospectus itself is unusual in that it does not give details of the higher education courses on offer, but it does give the College's contact details and location, the College's mission and ethos, application procedures and payment of fees, and the airport meeting service. The College is experimenting with electronic communication tools, such as social networking. Students indicated that this was a positive development.

3.3 Various handbooks for staff and students are available either on the website or on the intranet, and some are also printed. The Staff Policies handbook concentrates on procedures and policies - including terms of employment, equal opportunities, leave, health and safety, and handling complaints - but does not include information on teaching or academic and personal tutoring. Published policies include an Admission Policy and Procedures handbook to guide students through the admission process and inform them on required documents. The handbook for students provides essential information on aspects of living in the UK, induction, study skills and academic writing, referencing and plagiarism. The College does not provide a programme specification, as is required by Edexcel and suggested by the guidance in the Academic Infrastructure.

3.4 The College's virtual learning environment adequately supports the students' learning as a repository for lecture notes and programme handbooks. The staff are all trained to use the virtual learning environment and further support is readily available when required. Tutors upload teaching material and responsibility for the content is held at programme level. Assignment briefs are approved by the awarding body or organisation before being published in the programme handbook. The programme teams compile the programme handbooks using the College template. The virtual learning environment is also used for submission of assignments, which are checked by anti-plagiarism software.

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

3.5 The College ensures the accuracy and currency of essential legal and awarding body and organisation information by providing direct links to the relevant websites. These include UK Border Agency regulations and detailed course information. The Public Information Policy includes the purpose, principles, categories and confidentiality aspects of its public information, but not the procedures and responsibilities for ensuring currency and accuracy.

3.6 The website is updated by an outside contractor, working from information provided by the College. There is no named person or post with responsibility for the accuracy and currency of all published information. Instead, a small team holds regular, informal meetings to get updates and jointly check items such as programme handbooks, procedures and policies. It is recommended as desirable that the College considers establishing clear lines of responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information.

3.7 There is no formal feedback process for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information provided to students. Neither is there version control on College documents. However, students confirmed that the information they receive initially, at induction and at the start of modules is timely, helpful, accurate and complete.

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>

| Interlink College of Technology & Business Studies action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight November 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>a formal mechanism to discuss and disseminate good practice and to facilitate staff development (paragraph 1.8)</li> </ul> | <p>We will continue to use the established lunch and learn mechanism to strengthen and standardise practice across staff and departments</p> <p>In addition, training needs will systematically be identified from classroom observation and from student feedback</p> | <p>Ongoing monthly lunch and learn sessions</p> <p>Classroom observation and student feedback every semester</p> | Director of Studies         | <p>Improved classroom delivery</p> <p>Improved student academic results</p> <p>Up-to-date continuous professional development of staff</p> | Principal/<br>Academic Board | <p>Report from Academic Board and staff meetings</p> <p>Improved reports from classroom observation</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>robust recruitment processes that take into account all aspects of potential students' readiness and motivation</li> </ul> | We will focus on the critical first stage of the learners' journey, which is recruitment and selection. Part of this will include the use of our accreditation of  | Ongoing quarterly review and reflection on our September 2013 intake   | The Registrar and Principal | <p>Recruitment of quality students</p> <p>Evidence of more rigorous vetting of potential students'</p>                                     | Academic Board               | <p>Students' enrolment data</p> <p>Students' progression report</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 body and organisations.

|   |  |           |                |   |                |   |
|---|--|-----------|----------------|---|----------------|---|
| for study<br>(paragraph 2.2)  | <p>prior learning and experience (APL)</p> <p>We will verify the educational documents through web-based interviews</p>  |           |                | <p>academic qualifications and experience</p> <p>Increase in the course completion rate</p> |                | Periodic review by external verifier  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strong commitment to student welfare and support (paragraph 2.13)</li> </ul> | <p>Widen the current support and welfare mechanisms for our students. We will periodically review the system for both academic and personal issues</p> <p>In-depth interviews will be conducted quarterly to complement surveys, thereby understanding the weaknesses of written surveys, in terms of the reliance of data</p> <p>The president of the student representatives will continue to attend Academic Board meetings</p> <p>We will also request a quarterly report on student welfare issues from our student representatives</p> | June 2013 | Vice Principal | Improved students' welfare  | Academic Board | <p>Periodic review by external verifier</p> <p>Students' enrolment data</p> <p>Students' progression report</p> |

| <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 annual monitoring process so as to identify all points of strength and weakness and to ensure that good practice is shared across programmes (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul> | <p>Develop and formalise a consistent and uniform approach to monitoring programmes that cuts across departments</p> <p>Programme reports and external verifiers' reports and actions will be embedded in the annual report, including action taken in addressing the action points</p> | <p>Develop template in first week in February, 2013</p> <p>Implement and use template by end of term, April 2013</p> <p>Agreed programme report, August 2013</p> | <p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Principal</p> | <p>Establishment of areas of good practice; record of training sessions with programme managers; internal verification of monitoring records</p> | <p>Director of Studies</p> <p>Academic Board</p> | <p>End of year report</p>               |
| <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>review internal verification processes to enhance the consistency of feedback on student work (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.5)</li> </ul>  | <p>Develop consistency of approach to internal verification on student work, learning outcomes and assessment criteria</p> <p>Establish strict turnaround timetable for student feedback, and review this</p>   | <p>Draft policy, 30 March 2013</p> <p>Publication of policy and implementation of strategy, 30 May</p>   | <p>Principal</p>                          | <p>Publish strategy by target date</p> <p>Establish best practice internal verification process</p>  | <p>Academic Board</p>                            | <p>Feedback from students and staff</p> |

|   |   | 2013   |                     |   |                                 |  |
|---|---|--|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop overarching programme specifications for all programmes (paragraphs 2.6 and 3.3)</li> </ul>                          | Develop centre-devised overarching programme specifications for all its higher education programmes, in line with the <i>Guidelines for preparing programme specifications</i>  | In time for the start of the next academic year (September 2013-14 academic year)                                    | Director of Studies | Development and publication of programme module handbooks across all programmes | Academic Board                  | Periodic review by external verifier           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen teaching observation procedures (paragraph 2.9)</li> </ul>  | Align teaching and learning strategy and teaching observation procedures in order to provide clear and measurable outcomes and to maximise the developmental benefit for the individual teacher and the College as a whole  | Commence the alignment this term, and review and refine periodically - minimum once a term                           | Vice Principal      | Development of a clear written strategy   | Principal<br><br>Academic Board | Feedback from stakeholders                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish clear lines of responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information (paragraph 3.6)</li> </ul> | Set up a public information panel (PiP) responsible for public information accuracy and currency, including website content, virtual learning environment and the content of all public information provided by the College (including information about the website and on social media) | Recommend its formation at the next Academic Board meeting - progress to be reported to the Academic Board July 2013 | Principal           | The panel established and functioning by the target date                        | Academic Board                  | Periodic review and feedback from stakeholders |

## 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:

---

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

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

**highly trusted sponsor** An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

**learning opportunities** The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

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

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

**programme (of study)** An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

**programme specifications** Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes of study**, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

**provider** An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

**public information** Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

**reference points** Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**subject benchmark statement** A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

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

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

**RG 1116 02/13**

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

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

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2013

ISBN 978 1 84979 803 7

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

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786