



# **Grafton College of Management Sciences Limited**

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

December 2013

## Key findings about Grafton College of Management Sciences Limited

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in December 2013 the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of the Australian Institute of Business (AIB), the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) and Pearson.

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 its awarding organisations.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

### Good practice

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

- the highly effective academic and pastoral support provided by the College (paragraph 2.9).

### 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:

- integrate College monitoring processes into a unified framework (paragraph 1.4)
- strengthen the linkage between the College's Continuous Development Plan and its Curriculum Policy (paragraph 2.2)
- align the College Curriculum Policy to the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 2.4)
- extend the College standardisation process to all programmes (paragraph 2.13)
- produce and implement a policy in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education managing information and version control (paragraph 3.7).

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

- facilitate more student representation on College management committees (paragraph 1.2)
- take account of *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* level descriptors in teaching observations (paragraph 2.6)
- further develop protocols for the support of students with specific learning or physical needs (paragraph 2.10)
- make available a student guide which brings together all College study skills advice (paragraph 2.15)
- include standard student-focused information in its programme handbooks (paragraph 3.3)
- review its published information to eliminate inconsistencies (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 Grafton College of Management Sciences Limited (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. 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 AIB, CMI, ICM and Pearson. The review was carried out by Miss Karen Buckwell, Mr John Holloway and Mrs Maz Stewart (reviewers) and Emeritus Professor Nicholas Goddard (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included a range of documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding organisations and meetings with staff and students. A telephone conference was arranged between members of the review team and the representative of the overseas awarding organisation.

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

- the regulations of its awarding organisations
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ).

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

Grafton College of Management Sciences is a private limited company. It has three shareholders/directors who undertake active roles in the College Senior Management Team. The College was established in 2004 and occupies shared premises adjacent to Shepherd's Bush Green. The College has a small library and computer laboratory and a range of lecture/tutorial rooms. At present it has a capacity of approximately 400 students and has options to acquire additional rooms within the building should the need arise.

The College mission is to 'provide access to learning opportunities to all students and staff with respect and dignity thereby ensuring the development of a first class learning environment'. The key focus of the College is in vocational education in management and related subject areas at levels 4-7. There are currently 362 full-time students of which 221 are international and 141 recruited from the UK/EU.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations, with student numbers in brackets:

### **Australian Institute of Business**

- Master of Business Administration (27)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

### **Chartered Management Institute**

- Level 6 award in Management and Leadership (28)

### **The Institute of Commercial Management**

- Graduate Diploma in Management Studies (2)

### **Pearson**

- BTEC HND/C in Business (234)
- BTEC HND in Business (Accounting) (5)
- BTEC HND in Business (HRM) (4)
- BTEC HND in Business (Management) (13)
- BTEC HND in Business (Marketing) (3)
- BTEC HND in Business (Law) (1)
- BTEC HND/C in Travel and Tourism Management (10)
- BTEC HND/C in Computing and Systems Development (20)
- BTEC Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (15)

## **The College's stated responsibilities**

The College has devolved responsibility for the recruitment, guidance and induction of students, the provision of learning support and pastoral care and for supplying information on learning opportunities, programmes of study and individual modules. It has responsibility for the first marking of student assignments on Pearson, CMI and AIB programmes and the provision of formative and summative feedback. The examination component of the AIB Master of Business Administration programme is assessed by the awarding organisation which also sets assessments. Assessment on the outgoing ICM programme was also undertaken by the awarding organisation.

## **Recent developments**

The College has recently been approved by Student Finance England to support UK/EU students on its designated Pearson HND/C provision; the College has recruited its UK/EU students to these programmes. The College no longer recruits to its ICM programmes and in July 2013 was approved as a centre to offer Level 6 CMI courses. This will allow a progression route for students on the College's Level 5 HND programmes. It has enrolled 28 students onto the CMI award in Management and Leadership and delivery of this provision will commence in January 2014.

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

Students and their representatives worked with College management to produce a short student submission. Data for this was obtained by questionnaires which were widely circulated. A student representative also attended a QAA briefing event on the review method. A representative range of students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the review team during the review visit. These meetings were useful and their records have been used in the production of this report.

## Detailed findings about Grafton College of Management Sciences Limited

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College operates management structures that are currently effective, but it has recently undertaken a review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose in the future. This recognises that if the College expands, both in terms of student numbers and staff, more formal lines of reporting will be required. The role of the College Academic Board, to which all committees now report, has been strengthened and a new Programme Management Committee is to be introduced. This will oversee matters related to quality, teaching, learning and assessment and will formalise a range of important activities currently undertaken by staff on an ad hoc basis.

1.2 All College committees have clearly defined and appropriate terms of reference which are reflected in their deliberations and action. The Attendance and Monitoring Committee meets frequently and is effective; the Academic Board is reinforced by the inclusion of an external member with considerable experience of higher education. However, while the Student Welfare Committee has provision for student representation, students are not generally aware of this. No other College committees have student membership and it would be **desirable** for the College to facilitate more student representation on College management committees. This would enable the College to meet the Expectations of *Chapter B5: Student engagement* of the Quality Code.

1.3 The College directors have senior management positions as College Director/ Director of Marketing and Planning, Director of Finance and Head of Academics. They are supported by a Registrar and Senior Administrator and a Quality Curriculum Principal. The College academic management has recently been strengthened by the creation of a new post of Academic Director; it is intended that the post-holder will take responsibility for strategic developments within the College and chair the Academic Board. This will allow the current Head of Academics to give greater attention to the oversight of the College academic processes. As the revised committee structure has yet to be embedded in College activities, the College will need to review the effectiveness and efficiency of its management processes as part of its monitoring of quality assurance and academic standards.

1.4 The College undertakes annual reviews of all key data sets and external reports and is responsive in using them to identify any necessary action. An example is the recent revision of the College portfolio of courses in response to student achievement levels. It has also taken action to address a fall in completion rates for 2012-13 compared with the previous year. The College's Management Information System tracks applications and captures attendance and achievement data. It is intended to upgrade this system to allow more flexible use of data and performance metrics; the College will then be able to undertake more sophisticated analyses of information to enhance academic standards. While analysis of a range of performance data informs strategic decision making there are at present a diverse range of processes and reports which lack overall coherence. It is **advisable** for the College to integrate College monitoring processes into a unified framework.

### **How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?**

1.5 The College is aware of key external reference points but these are not yet embedded across the full range of its activities. The College has started a mapping exercise to match the precepts contained within the Quality Code to its own policies and procedures; so far it has addressed *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, and *Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education*. It has increased awareness of the Quality Code among staff by holding briefing sessions. When the mapping exercise is completed any action necessary will be taken by the Academic Board.

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

1.6 The College has a positive record of successful inspections and programme review visits. Recent Pearson external verifier reports have listed no essential actions and the College has made timely responses to enhancement recommendations. The College complies with the regulations and requirements of its UK and international awarding organisations and has developed and circulated to staff general quality policy and procedures that apply to all courses and a further set that applies to its Pearson provision.

1.7 The College Assessment Policy ensures that the assessment methodology of its awarding organisations informs all assessment procedures and is understood by staff. The Academic Board has overall responsibility for College compliance with the requirements of the awarding organisations and it monitors, and takes action on where necessary, the reports of external verifiers. It undertakes comprehensive programme reviews in order to respond to feedback and recommendations received from external verifiers: these are also reviewed in staff committee meetings.

1.8 The College has put in place a range of effective measures to assure its assessment processes which reflect the regulations of its awarding organisations. It has a clear policy on internal verification and there is evidence of its consistent application. On the cover sheets returned to students following assessment, the moderator is identified and a checklist of actions is included: in each example seen, this process was thoroughly completed. The Academic Calendar schedules regular standardisation sessions, and the written feedback to students is written to a standard template. The College's assessment practice is rigorous, and students receive comprehensive written and verbal feedback outlining clear guidance on how to improve their work.

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

## **2 Quality of learning opportunities**

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

2.1 The College effectively fulfils its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. It works with three awarding organisations who have clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of themselves and the College. Pearson external verification reports provide strong evidence that the College is fulfilling its responsibilities in respect of course management and delivery, and quality assurance. The College is currently

awaiting receipt of quality assurance and annual monitoring reports from its other awarding organisations.

2.2 The College utilises Pearson policies and protocols to ensure rigorous quality assurance of their programmes. AIB students are both internally and externally assessed, the outgoing ICM programmes are externally assessed. The College's Curriculum Policy sets out the quality assurance protocols and procedures for its ICM and AIB programmes. Although the content of the Curriculum Policy is comprehensive, it is generic in nature and requires greater contextualisation in relation to the programmes that it supports. This would allow it to more fully contribute to the College Continuous Development Plan which monitors the implementation of College policies. It is **advisable** that the College strengthen the linkage between the College's Continuous Development Plan and its Curriculum Policy.

### **How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?**

2.3 The College is effective in using external reference points to manage and enhance students' learning opportunities: it makes prompt responses to any recommendations arising from awarding organisation reports. The Academic Board manages the College's relationships with and compliance to the academic standards of its awarding organisations and formally reviews their reports. It initiates any College response to report content and dissemination of information to staff via teachers' meetings. Pearson external verification reports are posted on the staff and student virtual learning environment (VLE).

2.4 The College has initiated a mapping exercise to cross-reference its policies and protocols to the Quality Code (see paragraph 1.5). The mapping of the Admissions Policy to the Quality Code is comprehensive and detailed and provides clear guidelines on the academic assessment and recruitment of prospective students. The key Curriculum Policy document supports the delivery and quality assurance of the AIB and ICM programmes, but does not currently fully reflect the expectations and indicators of the Quality Code. It is **advisable** that the College align the College Curriculum Policy to the Expectations of the Quality Code as a priority in the mapping exercise.

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

2.5 The College has effective procedures in place to assure itself of the quality of teaching and learning. The Curriculum Policy contains the Teaching Strategy; this strategy is supported by a clearly defined process of annual lecturer observations. New staff are observed within three months of commencing employment. A 'cause for concern' observation outcome results in an additional observation within three months. Past observation outcomes form part of the pre-observation meeting content. Observations of teaching and learning are currently carried out by senior managers, namely the Quality and Curriculum Principal and the Head of Academics.

2.6 The observation outcomes feed into individual staff self-evaluation activity; they are used to identify both individual development needs, and areas for cross-college staff development activities. In-service training deriving from amalgamated teaching and learning observation outcomes has included, for example, updating staff skills on VLE. However, the observation of teaching and learning report form does not encourage an evaluation of students' acquisition of academic and professional skills and knowledge in accordance with the FHEQ descriptors. It would be **desirable** for the College to take account of the FHEQ level descriptors in teaching observations.

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

2.7 Applicants for a College programme are allocated a designated member of the admissions staff to guide and support them through programme selection, and the application visa processes if necessary. Students receive a thorough College and programme induction. The College operates cyclical risk-based 'academic progress reviews' which enable students to participate in performance review and academic target setting. Fortnightly Attendance Monitoring meetings identify students at risk and any required additional support or programme adjustment.

2.8 The College provides highly effective academic and pastoral support for students. The Student Welfare Committee oversees both academic and pastoral support within the College, and the Student Feedback and Evaluation Strategy specifies a range of feedback opportunities available to students, for example module and course evaluations, tutorials and review sessions.

2.9 Students confirm that the College operates an open access approach to both academic and pastoral support that enriches their academic learning and life skills experience. Examples include a request from AIB students for extra academic support leading to additional taught sessions over a weekend and a College provision of 'Being Safe' advice session delivered by the local constabulary. A dedicated College Welfare Team encompasses an extensive range of individual support including visa advice and the identification of places of worship, medical/dental treatment and insurance. The highly effective academic and pastoral support provided by the College is **good practice**.

2.10 While the College currently has no students with an identified learning or physical need, it has commenced contingency preparations for students with an identifiable need through the Dyslexia procedure. It would be **desirable** for the College to further develop protocols for the support of students with specific learning or physical needs.

## How effectively does the College develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?

2.11 The College has both strategic and operational policies and protocols in place to effectively support staff development. The Pearson external verifiers have commented favourably on the staff development activities carried out by the College. It has supported individual staff members to achieve academic and professional qualifications. The College meets AIB Master of Business Administration qualification requirements that its staff delivering the programme, termed 'facilitators', must have undertaken AIB development activities prior to approval to teach on the Master of Business Administration.

2.12 The College has comprehensive protocols for the selection, appointment, appraisal and development of staff. The induction process is planned and documented. On completion of the induction process the documentation is signed by the inductor and inductee. Staff report positively on the helpfulness of the induction process.

2.13 The College has used Pearson course standardisation procedures as a staff development activity in order to disseminate good practice to the teaching team on the assessment of students and the provision of feedback. The AIB Master of Business Administration programme is composed of internally assessed assignments and external examinations. There is no evidence of the use of the AIB assignment assessments as a standardisation activity in order to support internal course quality assurance and teaching team staff development. CMI programmes will commence delivery in January 2014 and will require the teaching team to implement new quality assurance protocols and assessment

procedures; planned standardisation activities for staff new to this awarding organisation would support them to embed these in the College quality assurance framework. This would also provide a platform for the dissemination of identified good practice. The College currently underutilises the use of programme standardisation to support its internal quality assurance and as a mechanism to provide internal staff development and it is **advisable** that the College extend its standardisation processes to all programmes.

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

2.14 The College effectively ensures that learning resources are both current and sufficient to support student learning. The Student Welfare Committee and the Head of Academics are responsible for ensuring that learning resources are available for all programmes delivered by the College. A range of learning resources are made available to students including course handbooks, an on-site library, VLE and awarding organisation online learning resources. The Library holds the required texts for all awarding organisations. Students use module and course evaluation forms, as well as course representation to provide feedback on the standard and availability of learning resources. The Pearson external verification reports have consistently commented on the comprehensive range of learning resources for their courses, as well as the College generated informative and supportive course handbooks.

2.15 The College ensures that students have access to a range of study skills opportunities. There is a VLE site for each programme, each with its own link to study skills advice and information. There are a range of study skills texts in the College library and attendance at study skills classes is compulsory. Students report that they have received excellent individual tutor study skills support. Some students comment that on the commencement of their programme of study they had not fully understood academic conventions and the range of protocols relating to academic malpractice, particularly plagiarism. The use of electronic plagiarism software has allowed them to evaluate their own practice in relation to plagiarism and to seek appropriate advice and guidance. However, the study skills advice is spread over a range of sources. It would be **desirable** for the College to make available a student guide which brings together all College study skills advice.

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 Information about learning opportunities**

### **How effectively does the College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?**

3.1 The College has developed a readily accessible website which provides comprehensive information for applicants, current students and staff. It contains the College's mission statement, curriculum content, entry requirements and fees for the courses offered by the College. The website enables direct online application and details of admission terms and conditions. Additional information about visa application, transport arrangements and living in London is easy to find. The website has direct feeds to BBC news and UKBA updates which the students find useful. The College's VLE and email system can be accessed easily through a link provided for staff and students on the College website.

3.2 The College's marketing material is produced in-house to a professional level which can be downloaded from the College website and sent to applicants; students find this useful. Course information material is approved by awarding organisations before being placed on the website.

3.3 Students are provided with a range of printed information during a well-structured induction process. All programme handbooks, although not standardised, contain accurate information on the course content, assessment grading and a brief overview of learning and teaching strategies which is drawn from awarding organisation specifications, but the format is not sufficiently student focused. While it is recognised that each of the College's awarding organisations has different programme specifications the value of the programme handbooks for students could be enhanced by incorporating standard student-centred information on such areas as student welfare services, learning and teaching strategies and student-focused policies and procedures. It would be **desirable** for the College to include standard student-focused information in its programme handbooks.

3.4 Students are provided with an extensive range of materials to support their learning, which they consider to be informative and easily accessible via the VLE. This gives clear, comprehensive information related to the induction programme, welfare support, student representatives, programme specific timetables and submission schedules. Staff and students receive effective training and ongoing support on using the VLE. Noticeboards around the College premises are well maintained with clear and current information. Student representatives and staff are easily identified as photographs and details are displayed. The College uses a range of techniques including the induction programme, end of unit evaluations, course representation and comment boxes to illicit students' views. Some evaluation of the information obtained is displayed on noticeboards in a 'you said, we did' format.

3.5 The College has invested in plagiarism-detection software which the students find effective in developing an understanding of referencing conventions. Although plagiarism is highlighted in class sessions, on assignment briefs and in some awarding organisations' study skills guides, there is no specific published advice guide to help students understand how to avoid plagiarism and the consequences of academic misconduct; this could usefully be incorporated into a College study skills guide (see paragraph 2.15).

### **How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?**

3.6 The Senior Management Team uses a range of techniques to inform staff and students about college-wide initiatives and developments. However, there are some inconsistencies between the College's website, VLE and internal files of published policies and procedures which could result in confusion for both staff and students. It would be **desirable** for the College to review its published information to eliminate inconsistencies.

3.7 Course information is taken directly from the awarding organisations' publications. Updates to Programme Handbooks are reviewed and approved by the Head of Academics. Requests for changes or updates to the website are reviewed and implemented by the Marketing and Planning Director or the Quality and Curriculum Principal. A scrutiny process to maintain oversight of the suitability of items of information is conducted on a six-monthly cycle. The Senior Management Team take responsibility for this audit but do not operate within a formalised policy which meets the expectations of *Part C: Information about higher education provision* of the Quality Code. It is **advisable** that the College produce and implement a policy in accordance with the Quality Code for managing information and version control.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

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

Grafton College of Management Sciences Limited action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight December 2013						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the highly effective academic and pastoral support provided by the College (paragraph 2.9).</li> </ul>	<p>The student academic learning and life experience is enriched and augmented</p> <p>Good practice is disseminated effectively through communicating experience and evidence gained throughout the College, leading to sustained change</p>	<p>Maintain and enhance college open access, engaging approach to both academic and pastoral support</p> <p>Build upon, develop and extend the work of the dedicated College Welfare Team in providing one-to-one as well as group support and advice</p>	From February 2014 onwards	Quality and Curriculum/ Exams Officer, Teaching and Welfare Team	Director of Marketing and Planning, Director of Finance, Head of Academics and Registrar and Senior Administrator	Student satisfaction surveys; organisations meetings and related feedback reports

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

Advisable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integrate College monitoring processes into a unified framework (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	More flexible use is made of data and performance metrics that enables sophisticated analyses to enhance academic standards	<p>Upgrade College's management information system to allow more flexible use of data and performance metrics to affect, for example, rates of retention, completion and achievements</p> <p>Upgrade student exam system to analyse and evaluate student performance more effectively</p> <p>Ensure enhancement activities are overseen at strategic level and monitored more systematically; to make effective and coherent use of data</p>	From March 2014 onwards	College Senior Management, Head of Academics, Registrar and Senior Administrator	Director of Marketing and Planning, Director of Finance, Academic Board and Quality Assurance Coordinator	Appraisal Review by Directors and Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen the linkage between the College's Continuous Development Plan and its Curriculum Policy (paragraph 2.2)</li> </ul>	Closer linkage between curriculum development and related policy and the College's overall macro development perspective	Integrate the curriculum within strategic insight and operational plans, in conjunction with awarding organisations and partners	From March 2014 onwards	College Senior Management Team	Director of Marketing and Planning, Director of Finance, Academic	Annual college review, Senior Management Team meeting minutes

	Strategic insight aligns the College offering with changing learners' requirements	Develop learning/assessment opportunities that are more relevant to learners			Board and awarding organisations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>align the College Curriculum Policy to the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 2.4)</li> </ul>	Effective processes are in place to approve and periodically review the validity and relevance of programme for closer alignment with the Quality Code indicators	<p>Consult with Academic Board, Senior Management Team and awarding organisations to develop innovative system for curriculum design and approval</p> <p>Offer development opportunities for those staff undertaking curriculum design and development</p> <p>Develop and instigate an effective process to engage all relevant stakeholders in the curriculum design and development process</p>	From March 2014 to July 2014 and reviewed annually	Heads of departments/ Head of Academics/ Quality and Curriculum Principal	Senior Management Team/ Director of Marketing and Planning; awarding organisations	Curriculum design, approval and validation policies and procedures, in conjunction with, and approval by, awarding organisations (such as AIB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extend the College standardisation process to all programmes (paragraph 2.13)</li> </ul>	Formative and summative assessment is standardised across all programmes	In coordination with awarding organisations, extend the use of programme standardisation across all departments to support college internal quality assurance	From academic year 2014-15	Heads of departments/ Head of Academics/ Quality and Curriculum Principal	Director of Marketing and Planning, Director of Finance, awarding organisations and	Teachers observations, assessment records, continuing professional development records, programme

	Good practice is identified and disseminated	Organise further staff developmental activities to embed quality assurance protocols, assessment procedures (formative and summative) and standardisation in the College's internal quality assurance framework			Academic Board	design, approval and validation policies and procedures, in conjunction with and approval by, awarding organisations, (such as AIB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produce and implement a policy in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education managing information and version control (paragraph 3.7).</li> </ul>	A formal policy that is aligned to <i>Part C: Information about higher education provision</i> of the Quality Code is produced and implemented to manage information and version control	Develop and implement a policy and procedure that enables regular scrutiny of information	Starting March 2014 onwards	Director of Marketing and Planning/ Head of Academics/ Registrar and Senior Administrator/ Marketing Manager/ Quality and Curriculum Principal	Directors/ awarding organisations and Academic Board	<p>Programme and syllabus design, approval and validation policies and procedures, the revision and update of finalised versions</p> <p>Developing an information policy and a timetable for information to be authorised and published</p>

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilitate more student representation on College management committees (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	Student representatives sit on College management committees as active partners in the process of programme development and evolution	<p>Invoking the student representative selection policy, student representatives from different programmes are included in College management committees where they can meet senior management and academic staff to discuss all issues related to the delivery and assessment of modules/programmes</p> <p>Offer more training and support to the student representatives to make the representation more effective</p>	From January 2014 onwards	Senior Management Team	Director of Marketing and Planning/ awarding organisations / Academic Board	Students' satisfaction surveys, students' performance and retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take account of <i>The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland</i> level descriptors in teaching</li> </ul>	Teaching observations take account of <i>The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland</i> level	Ensure that staff appraisals and peer observations ascertain the interrogation of and adherence to <i>The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and</i>	From September 2014 onwards and to be reviewed periodically	Head of Academics/ teaching staff/ appraisers	Director of Marketing and Planning/ Director of Finance and Academic Board	Programme and syllabus design, approval and validation policies and procedures in conjunction with, and approval by,

observations (paragraph 2.6)	descriptors to ensure closer matching of intended learning outcomes in terms of, for example, intellectual and cognitive skills and attributes, transferable skills	<i>Northern Ireland</i> level descriptors at all stages				awarding organisations, (such as AIB)  Staff appraisal forms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further develop protocols for the support of students with specific learning or physical needs (paragraph 2.10)</li> </ul>	Enable students to be included fully in their College communities and make a successful transition to the workplace	Set out policies and procedures aimed at enabling students with specific educational and physical needs to reach their full potential	From August 2014 onwards and to be reviewed periodically	Senior Management and Welfare teams	Director of Marketing and Planning/ Director of Finance and Academic Board	Students' satisfaction surveys, students' performance, progression and retention records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make available a student guide which brings together all College study skills advice (paragraph 2.15)</li> </ul>	Provision of comprehensive information maintains and improves student performance and satisfaction resulting in reduced level of drop out/programme transfers	Provision of comprehensive information for prospective and current students via programme handbooks and virtual learning environment  Update (including Website) on an annual basis for the start of each new academic year. In addition more tutorials will be planned. Inductions and Orientations will be made more effective	From September 2014 onwards and reviewed periodically	Head of Academics, Lecturers, Registrar and Senior Administrator, Marketing Manager	Director of Marketing and Planning/ Senior Management Team	Evaluation of student feedback questionnaires, minutes of the Programme Committee meetings, and evidence of complaints

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include standard student-focused information in its programme handbooks (paragraph 3.3)</li> </ul>	<p>Maintain and improve students' performance, satisfaction and retention rate</p>	<p>Develop detailed standardised, student oriented programme handbooks to include aspects such as student welfare services, teaching and assessment criteria to enhance learning support</p>	<p>From September 2014 onwards and reviewed periodically</p>	<p>Head of Academics, Lecturers, Registrar and Senior Administrator, Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Director of Marketing and Planning and Academic Board</p>	<p>Evaluation of student feedback questionnaires, minutes of the Programme Committee meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review its published information to eliminate inconsistencies (paragraph 3.6).</li> </ul>	<p>Published information is regularly reviewed to eliminate inconsistencies, minimise confusion and maintain and improve student satisfaction</p>	<p>Develop a process to regularly audit and review on the website, virtual learning environment and internal files of published policies and procedures.</p> <p>More detailed audits will be planned and carried out bi-annually where the input from all stakeholders will also be accommodated</p>	<p>From September 2014 onwards and reviewed periodically</p>	<p>Director of Marketing and Planning/ Registrar and Senior Administrator/ Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Directors/ awarding organisations and Academic Board</p>	<p>Evaluation of student feedback questionnaires, minutes of the Programme Committee meetings, and evidence of complaints</p>

## 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/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight).

## 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 quality** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

**academic standards** The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

**awarding body** A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA .

**awarding organisation** An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

**enhancement** The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

**external examiner** An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

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

**good practice** A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

**highly trusted sponsor** An organisation 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.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

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

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

**programme (of study)** An approved course of study that 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 (s) (of higher education)** Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation 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').

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

**Quality Code** Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

**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.

**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 standards** The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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