Higher Education Review of Westminster Kingsway College

February 2015

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Westminster Kingsway College. The review took place from 24 to 26 February 2015 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Brian Whitehead
- Dr Amanda Wilcox
- Ms Sarah Mullins (student reviewer)

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Westminster Kingsway College and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review, the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

In reviewing Westminster Kingsway College the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The themes for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the Glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages:
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Westminster Kingsway College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Westminster Kingsway College.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations
- The quality of the information produced about its provision **meets** UK expectations
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Westminster Kingsway College.

- The integrated and systematic use of the virtual learning environment to support students' learning and progression (Expectation B3).
- The highly effective pastoral and academic support provided by personal tutors which enhances students' academic progression and employment prospects (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Westminster Kingsway College.

By June 2015:

- ensure that information about the process for academic appeals is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy, and communicated effectively to staff and students (Expectation B9 and C).

By September 2015:

- formalise and document the internal processes for programme design and approval and ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and comprehensible (Expectation A3.1 and C)
- clarify and formalise the internal processes for module design and development (Expectation B1)
- increase the involvement of students in the formal quality assurance and enhancement processes (Expectation B5 and Enhancement)
- consolidate the various improvement activities to provide a more strategic approach to enhancement (Enhancement).

Theme: Student Employability

The College's core objectives place great value on ensuring that the higher education programmes it delivers improve the employment prospects of students. College plans the curriculum to ensure that it integrates employment and business opportunities to help students develop and consolidate their learning and acquire new employability skills.

Students value highly the employability skills which they gain through their studies at the College and the connections which their tutors have with industry.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Higher Education Review](#).

About Westminster Kingsway College

Westminster Kingsway College (the College) is a large general further education college and the largest provider of post-16 education in central London. It operates on four main sites at King's Cross, Regent's Park, Soho and Victoria. The College serves areas of high socio-economic disadvantage within central London with students drawn from all 33 London boroughs, across the UK, and internationally. In 2013-14, the College enrolled over 15,000 students, the majority of whom were aged over 19. Widening participation and promoting progression are the focus of much of the College's higher education provision.

Around half of the enrolments to the College are in preparation for life and work. Other curriculum areas include health and care, hospitality and catering, arts and media, and business and administration. An increasing number of work-based learners follow apprenticeship programmes. Two-thirds of the College's enrolments are vocational qualifications at level 2 or below. Many adult further education learners come to learn English as a second language, or to improve their literacy and numeracy.

Through its higher education work the College aims to increase access and widen participation. It provides progression routes for students completing Access to Higher Education and other level 3 programmes. More than 60 per cent of the higher education students enrolled at the College are over 25 years of age, with the majority studying on full-time programmes.

In 2014-15 there are 348 students enrolled on higher education programmes. These are managed within two College departments, with the majority of the provision based in the Higher Education, Business and Enterprise Faculty. The two foundation year programmes are managed in the 14-19 Teaching and Learning Faculty. The College works in partnership with four universities: City University London; Leeds Beckett University; London South Bank University; and Sheffield Hallam University.

Since the last QAA review in 2010 the College has been withdrawing from its partnership with Leeds Beckett University. In 2013 the College validated a new suite of programmes in partnership with London South Bank University. The College has significantly expanded the number of students enrolled on the foundation year in Engineering with City University London.

The College has made reasonable progress in addressing the five areas of good practice and five desirable recommendations from its previous QAA review in 2010.

Explanation of the findings about Westminster Kingsway College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

Explanation of the findings about Westminster Kingsway College

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1 The College delivers programmes in partnership with four degree-awarding bodies. The qualifications provided by the College adhere to the principles and responsibilities laid out in the universities' memorandums of agreement and quality assurance handbooks. These specify the external reference points, including *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). It is aware of its duty to maintain academic standards, and exercises this responsibility in accordance with the procedures of its awarding bodies. These arrangements allow Expectation A1 to be met in theory.

1.2 The review team tested the approach by reviewing documentary evidence, including quality assurance policies and procedures, validation reports, external examiners' reports, and talking to link tutors, senior College staff and others involved in programme delivery.

1.3 For programmes validated by London South Bank University (LSBU), programme and module specifications are designed and completed by the College and submitted for approval on specified templates. For City University London and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) programmes, module details and assessments are provided by the awarding body.

College staff are familiar with the relevant qualification frameworks and ensure that programmes are positioned appropriately. External examiners confirm that the teaching and assessment of the programmes is at the required standard.

1.4   Both teaching and support staff are clear about how the programmes are aligned to the relevant aspects of appropriate external reference points, including the Quality Code, the *Foundation Degree Quality Benchmark*, and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. Naming of qualifications is in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the FHEQ. Programme specifications define learning outcomes, which are well understood by teaching staff and students. Academic credit values reflect their relationship to programme delivery and the associated volume of study. Staff development has been provided on the Quality Code, alongside training on other relevant aspects of higher education delivery.

1.5   The College has limited responsibilities owing to the nature of its partnerships and franchise arrangements. It discharges its responsibilities effectively within the context of its agreements with its awarding bodies. The College does not have responsibility for programme approval and staff have sufficient knowledge of the academic reference points to support programme development and delivery. Overall, the review team concludes that Expectation A1 is met and associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.6   The College works within the academic governance arrangements, frameworks and regulations of its degree-awarding bodies in order to maintain the standards of its programmes. These frameworks and regulations guide the College on delivery matters related to level of study and achievement of credits.

1.7   It has an integrated governance system, with the Board of Governors being the senior deliberative committee with responsibility and oversight of all higher education. Executive responsibilities are delegated by the Principal, through the College management team, to the Programme Leader for Higher Education. This ensures appropriate adherence to the frameworks and regulations of the various awarding bodies. These arrangements allow Expectation A2.1 to be met in theory.

1.8   The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the College's processes by considering programme documentation, including regulatory frameworks, policies and procedures from awarding body partners, and the College's internal documentation. The team met a range of staff, including link tutors from the awarding bodies.

1.9   The frameworks and regulations of the awarding bodies are implemented effectively by the College under its own higher education governance arrangements. The majority of the College's higher education is managed and delivered in a single faculty which facilitates effective oversight of provision. The foundation year programmes in Engineering and Actuarial Science are managed and delivered in a separate faculty but with appropriate managerial oversight.

1.10   The College has two deliberative committees, the Board of Governors and the Quality and Standards Committee. While the College's higher education provision is relatively small, with the majority of provision validated by one awarding body, this system provides appropriate levels of oversight. However, if the provision expands significantly the College may consider a more elaborate and robust structure for the governance of higher education programmes.

1.11   The College is required to produce an annual report for its awarding bodies to demonstrate that it meets all the requirements set out in its partnership agreements and the relevant regulations. College staff are able to articulate clearly both the internal governance structures within the College, which have responsibility for the oversight and management of the provision, and the processes required by the awarding bodies.

1.12   The relevant academic frameworks and regulations are in place and are understood. The responsibility for regulatory frameworks lies with the awarding bodies. The College's governance structure and quality management processes are appropriate, clearly understood by staff, and interact with the requirements of the awarding bodies. The review team concludes that Expectation A2.1 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.13   Definitive course records, in the form of programme specifications, are developed and documented through the validation processes for each awarding body. The College is responsible for ensuring that definitive documents inform delivery, and support processes for the monitoring and review of programmes. These arrangements allow Expectation A2.2 to be met in theory.

1.14   Programme specifications for all programmes are agreed at validation alongside module descriptors. For programmes validated by LSBU, programme specifications are developed by the College. These are based on a standard template which ensures consistency of approach. Students can access relevant course information through module handbooks which are readily available on the College's virtual learning environment (VLE).

1.15   The review team corroborated the evidence by reviewing relevant documentation, including programme handbooks, specifications, and module documents and by viewing a demonstration of the College's VLE. The team held meetings with senior staff, delivery staff, those who manage the partnerships, and with students.

1.16   Staff articulated the process for the development, use and availability of programme specifications, clarifying their use in assessment planning, delivery, monitoring and review for all programmes. Staff are clear where programme information is held, and who has responsibility for updating records. Students are aware of programme specification information available through the College VLE and are confident that these are accessible and utilised effectively to support their learning.

1.17   Overall, College staff understand their responsibilities for maintaining a definitive record of each programme. Information about the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected achievement is readily available to students. The review team concludes that Expectation A2.2 is met, and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.18   Responsibility for the approval of higher education programmes delivered by the College lies with the awarding bodies. All four awarding bodies have clear processes and documentation relating to the design and approval of programmes. These processes are in accordance with their own academic framework and regulations. The *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark* and Subject Benchmark Statements are understood by the College and referenced when writing new programmes. Appropriate documentation shows the mapping of modules for each programme to the learning outcomes. Levels are also benchmarked to the FHEQ. These arrangements enable Expectation A3.1 to be met in theory.

1.19   The review team looked at documentation supplied in the self-evaluation portfolio and the accompanying evidence, which included programme specifications, validation reports, external examiners' reports, and quality handbooks. The team also held meetings with representatives of the awarding bodies, staff and students.

1.20   Programmes are selected and designed to be aligned with an identified workplace and with employment needs of local industries, particularly hospitality programmes. This developmental activity is overseen and scrutinised by the senior management team. The validation process begins with senior managers having initial discussions about the programme with representatives of the awarding bodies. Modules and programme specifications are then written by the College teams.

1.21   The formal validation process works in practice because of the oversight provided by the awarding bodies. However, the processes within the College are less clear. Senior staff reported that internal discussions and informal communications with the awarding bodies took place, but there is no internal recording of this. There is no formalised College deliberative process for considering the development of programmes or modules, or to confirm that the programmes are aligned with external reference points. Internal roles, responsibilities and practices are not clear for the development of new programmes. The College's Higher Education Strategy for 2014-17 is to further develop its higher education provision and identifies the intention to introduce a range of new curriculum areas based on an assessment of skills needs and market demand. The review team therefore **recommends** that, by September 2015, the College formalises and documents the internal processes for programme design and approval and ensures that roles and responsibilities are clear and comprehensible.

1.22   Overall, the informal processes for the internal approval of new programmes are understood by staff. However, there is no formalised College process and a lack of clarity about responsibilities. The review team concludes that Expectation A3.1 is met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.23   The responsibility for specifying programme learning outcomes lies initially with the College. Ultimate responsibility for the approval of these rests with the awarding bodies. Programme outcomes are validated through the awarding bodies' processes, and a definitive validation document is produced for each programme. Assessment tasks are produced within the College in line with its Higher Education Assessment Policy, which provides comprehensive guidance. Module specifications show the assessments used to demonstrate evidence of achievement of the module outcomes.

1.24   All assessment tasks are approved by the awarding body and the external examiners annually before being issued to students. The College operates an effective internal verification process for assessment briefs and student work. External examiners' reports confirm that programmes meet the relevant academic standards for the awards offered. Examiners' comments inform the annual programme reviews and the College's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). These processes allow the Expectation to be met in theory.

1.25   The review team explored the effectiveness of these procedures and policies by analysing relevant papers and minutes, assignments, the higher education QIP, minutes of staff meetings and staff development events. The team also had discussions with senior managers and programme staff, and awarding body representatives.

1.26   Programmes designed and developed by the College are scrutinised by the awarding bodies through rigorous and well documented systems. These ensure the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes, and their alignment to assessment instruments and teaching and learning methods. The assessment process works effectively in practice. Marked work is moderated internally first and then by the university link tutor. The team found that assessments are clearly aligned to the intended learning outcomes and that the marking of the assessments relates to these. This process is clearly understood by students. The College has responded to previous years' external examiners' comments and from the awarding body to ensure that the internal moderation process is transparent and consistent. This is identified in the QIP and evidenced in students assessed work.

1.27   Overall, the College has systems in place to ensure that the assessment of students is robust, valid and reliable, and that the award of qualifications and credit is based on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A3.2 is met in both design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.28   The College's memorandums of agreement detail how the degree-awarding bodies monitor academic standards. The College is subject to the processes of its awarding bodies for annual and periodic review. The College has its own internal review processes which work in parallel with the requirements of the awarding bodies. These ensure that the College complies with the Expectations of the Quality Code, the FHEQ and the requirements of its university partners.

1.29   Module leaders produce a report based on students' achievements, student feedback, and their own reflections at the end of each module. Reports are discussed at module board meetings and are included in the College's Self-Assessment Reports (SAR) which leads to a QIP. The higher education SAR is considered by the Quality and Standards Committee of the Corporation, which then forms the basis of the reports that the College makes to each of its awarding bodies. The QIP is continually monitored, and formally reviewed three times a year. These processes allow Expectation A3.3 to be met in theory.

1.30   The review team examined documentation from the College and universities relating to programme monitoring and review, programme documentation, annual monitoring reports and quality improvement plans. The team also met staff and students, and link tutors.

1.31   The partner universities deploy external examiners who visit the College at least once a year and produce an annual report for each programme. The good practice, and any issues arising, are addressed by the staff team, and included in the programme monitoring reports and in the QIP. The universities designate link tutors from relevant faculties who provide academic support and advice. This is in addition to the support provided by the partnership offices, and regular meetings are held with programme teams who liaise with the Higher Education Programme Manager and directors of faculty.

1.32   The review team considers that the process is effective. The reporting system is thorough, and consideration within the teaching teams is followed by inclusion and discussion in the SAR before being considered by the College's Quality and Standards Committee. The SAR report, and any changes to the progress of the programme, are monitored regularly throughout the following year.

1.33   The review team considers that effective monitoring and review mechanisms are in place. The processes employed by the College and the oversight of its awarding partners are appropriate and robust. The team therefore concludes that Expectation A3.3 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.34   The College designs and delivers programmes approved by its degree-awarding bodies and works closely with external examiners appointed by them. The use of external input and expertise in the design, operation and review of programmes is specified in the regulatory frameworks of the awarding bodies. In addition, it seeks to draw on independent external expertise from employers to support programme development and delivery and assessment practice. These arrangements allow Expectation 3.4 to be met in theory.

1.35   The review team reviewed relevant documentation, minutes of programme development meetings, business case proposals, validation and external examiners' reports. The team met staff and link tutors to evaluate the effectiveness of the College in involving independent external participation in the management of threshold academic standards.

1.36   The College nominates suitable external examiner candidates who are considered and appointed by the awarding bodies. The College shows how it effectively uses advice from external examiners to uphold academic standards by effective responses to their reports, and through its annual monitoring and review cycle.

1.37   Responsibility for ensuring independent external participation in the management of threshold standards rests predominantly with the College's degree-awarding bodies. However, the College makes effective use of the advice provided through external examiners' reports to ensure the maintenance of academic standards.

1.38   The College regularly engages with employers during the development and delivery of programmes, to ensure that the content and assessment of modules is current. The effective use of this external expertise has been recognised and commended by programme validation panels of the awarding body.

1.39   Overall, external and independent expertise is appropriately used. The College meets the requirements of its awarding bodies. Comments from external examiners and other external sources are responded to appropriately. Therefore the review team concludes that Expectation 3.4 is met and the associated level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.40.   In reaching its judgement about academic standards the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook.

1.41.   Although all of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met, the risk is judged moderate in one area, Expectation A3.1. In all sections related to academic standards the College is also required to adhere to the procedures of its awarding bodies.

1.42.   There is one recommendation related to the moderate risk in Expectation A3.1 which requires the College to formalise and document the internal processes for programme design and approval and ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and comprehensible.

1.43.   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the College's degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval*

Findings

2.1 The design, development, approval and modification of programmes is primarily the responsibility of the College's awarding bodies and follows their published procedures. Programmes are reviewed through the College's own internal approval processes. These consider external reference points such as the FHEQ, *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark* and Subject Benchmark Statements. The approach the College takes towards programme design and approval enables it to meet Expectation B1 in theory.

2.2 The review team took account of relevant documentation, including records of programme design and approval processes, the minutes of meetings of senior management and programme teams, and validation reports, and talked to senior staff, academic staff and students.

2.3 The College regularly reviews its provision and identifies new markets and skill gaps in order to develop an appropriately balanced curriculum. This activity supports its strategic mission and aims. Within the College, the process for identifying higher education programmes is thorough, and considerable use is made of local knowledge, labour market intelligence, and London skills needs. The programme documentation, as presented to the awarding bodies, has been commended for its content and presentation. However, the formal internal mechanisms for the design of the programmes leading to this documentation are not evident and the process is not formalised.

2.4 The internal process for developing and modifying modules in the College is not clear. There is no explicit evidence of the development process, nor discussions and formal consideration of the content of modules and programmes. It is not clear what the internal roles and practices relating to new programmes are, and which groups are responsible for the design and content of modules, programmes and qualifications. There is no evidence of the management team formally agreeing to the content of modules before these are presented to the awarding bodies for validation. The review team **recommends** that, by September 2015, the College clarifies and formalises the internal processes for module design and development.

2.5 Overall, the informal processes for the internal approval of new modules and programmes are understood by staff. However, there is no formalised College system, and a lack of clarity about responsibilities. The review team concludes that Expectation B1 is met but the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission*

Findings

2.6   The College is responsible for the selection, admission and registration of all students following the entry requirements and procedures set out by the awarding bodies. The College has a clear admissions policy which is applied to all application. The College's application and enrolment process sets out procedures for enrolment of new and returning students. Admissions to the foundation year programmes are managed in line with the policy set out by the awarding body and selection is made by admissions tutors at City University London.

2.7   Recruitment is carried out through open days and events, UCAS, the College prospectus and its website. Entry requirements are available to students for each course on the College website and are used for selection in line with relevant awarding bodies' expectations. All prospective students are interviewed prior to an offer being made. Offers are made direct to the College and through UCAS and successful applicants are sent an information pack with induction information. Students are enrolled and inducted, with access to a dedicated learner experience team, relevant tutors and the Higher Education Programme Manager. This ensures that all relevant information, advice and guidance is available to students. The College Admissions Policy is reviewed annually to ensure relevance and to monitor its effectiveness. The admissions procedures outlined meet the Expectation and reflect the Indicators of sound practice. These arrangements allow Expectation B2 to be met in theory.

2.8   In order to test this expectation the review team considered the information available to prospective students, the policies and procedures relevant to recruitment, selection, admissions and induction, and discussed the processes with relevant staff and students.

2.9   Prospective students can access information about the College and programmes through open days, the website and the Prospectus. These provide relevant, robust information on the programmes of study which allows students to make informed decisions. Students are made aware of the application process through the Application Guide on the website, which gives clear information on what to expect throughout the application and admissions process. Students commented favourably on the information available to them before admission and the easily navigable application process. All potential students attend an interview which sometimes involve evaluative tasks. Students can indicate additional support needs at application, during interview, induction and throughout the course. This results in the effective provision of additional support, advice and guidance. If additional needs are highlighted in advance, support is offered to ensure a fair and accessible interview process. Processes for appeal of an admissions decision are outlined in the College Admissions Policy.

2.10   Students receive a thorough induction to relevant staff, information and support. Induction is embedded into the tutorial system for the first six weeks and includes a briefing on the learning centre and introduction to other learning resources. Students comment positively on the induction process as a valuable experience, with a variety of useful activities which aids their transition into higher education.

2.11   Staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and admissions are suitably trained, with dedicated members of staff where appropriate. The College holds Matrix quality Standard for information, advice and guidance. The learner experience team manager meets a UCAS representative annually to evaluate information and to ensure the College team is up to date with requirements and information.

2.12   Overall, the review team concludes that recruitment, selection and admissions processes are robust, fair and accessible. The College has effective policies in place and the admissions process is well managed, and students reflect positively on their experiences. The team therefore concludes that Expectation B2 is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.13   The College's Learning and Teaching Policy is mapped against the expectations of the Quality Code. This is supported by a series of practices which evaluate teaching on a regular basis. The outcomes of these evaluations are reflected in the higher education Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and resulting Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Awarding bodies have clear processes for the appointment of staff and staff are appraised annually, with outcomes feeding into individual development reviews. Higher education staff have a series of annual personal development days which are used for subject and scholarly updating.

2.14   Resources to support learning are verified by the awarding body as part of the programme approval process, and student views are captured to ensure that these are fit for purpose. Students are also able to access physical and virtual resources at the relevant university. The College's virtual learning environment (VLE) contains information for students relating to their progress and achievement.

2.15   Students have regular group and personal tutorial sessions which are used to inform them of their academic progress. The College's Student Charter sets out its expectations on student behaviour and conduct. These arrangements allow the College to meet Expectation B3 in theory.

2.16   The review team looked at College documentation, including policies and strategy documents, staff CVs, self-assessment reports and QIPs, and student questionnaire data. The team met senior managers and teaching staff, and students from across the provision.

2.17   The quality of teaching at the College is monitored through an annual teaching observation of each member of staff. This links to a staff performance, development and review process which plans individual staff development and mentoring opportunities. Additionally, the Higher Education Programme Manager and the Teaching and Learning Coach arrange and deliver a series of eight bespoke planning and development days a year, and also bite-size professional development sessions on a range of relevant topics. One member of staff is a fellow of the Higher Education Academy, with another working towards it. There is emerging evidence of scholarly activity across the higher education team.

2.18   In the last two years the College has taken a strategic approach to the improvement of learning and teaching through its 'Year of Learning' and 'Make Learning Count' initiatives. These have resulted in additional one-to-one and team coaching opportunities for staff, as well as informal lesson observations and reflective feedback sessions. This initiative has led to the identification of a specialist Higher Education Teaching and Learning Coach who works regularly with the staff across programmes.

2.19   The College ensures that its teaching practices, and the learning opportunities it provides, maximise learner success, primarily through the annual monitoring processes. SAR and the resulting QIPs are produced annually and monitored at regular intervals both at programme and College levels. Feedback from staff, students and employers is used as part

of regular course meetings and the self-assessment process. The outcomes of this feed into the annual QIP. Alongside this an ongoing analysis of data on student retention and achievement ensures that programme delivery meets internal and external expectations.

2.20   The majority of the College's higher education programmes are based in the Victoria Centre. The City University London's Foundation Years in Actuarial Science and in Engineering are based at the Kings Cross Centre. Resources for higher education programmes are approved by the awarding body as part of the validation process. During the 2014-15 academic year the provision normally based at the Victoria Centre has moved to the Regent's Park Centre, while extensive refurbishment takes place. Students were fully involved in the decision to move the provision on a temporary basis. At a meeting with the review team students spoke extremely positively about the efficiency of these arrangements, and the facilities that had been put in place. A new temporary Learning Resource Centre, with extended opening hours, has been created at the Regent's Park Centre to accommodate the specific needs of higher education students. This temporary relocation has been effectively managed by the College with minimal disruption to student learning.

2.21   The College makes extensive use of its VLE to post programme information and support material and to provide feedback to students on their assessed work. Two VLE advanced practitioners provide ongoing support for further technical and pedagogic development. The College's handbook sets out a minimum expectation for the use of the VLE by staff. A recent audit was undertaken to ensure compliance with College standards. Students speak highly of the VLE and its effectiveness in supporting their learning and progression. The review team considers the integrated and systematic use of the virtual learning environment to support students' learning and progression to be **good practice**.

2.22   Students highly value the regular tutorials to provide them with support for their academic learning and personal development. Analysis of completion data shows that the number of students completing their award within the expected timeframes has improved from 70 per cent to 78 per cent in the last five years. While this is a positive improvement, the review team would encourage the College to continue to monitor success rates carefully.

2.23   Overall, the College articulates and implements appropriate processes to ensure that teaching and learning effectively support student achievement, and has a clear commitment to supporting its students' development and progression The team concludes that Expectation B3 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.24   The services provided to support student development and achievement are regularly monitored and evaluated through the self-assessment and quality improvement process. Awarding bodies are also informed of issues and actions through the annual course monitoring report produced by the College.

2.25   Academic, pastoral and professional support is provided to students by both academic personal tutors and specialist support staff. Staff performance in these roles is evaluated annually through the College's staff Performance, Development and Review process.

2.26   Support for higher education students at the College is provided by the Learner Experience Team, Personal Support Services (PSS) and the Careers Office based at the Victoria Centre. The College publishes a Single Equality Scheme and a Learner Engagement Strategy. Students with specific learning requirements are assessed in order to determine support needs by the College's PSS team.

2.27   Students are able to access academic support through personal tutors in both structured and informal tutorial sessions. Tutors provide information and support on academic progress in addition to personal support where required. Students are also able to access progress and achievement information through the VLE. Personal development modules are incorporated into all programmes, allowing students to set, develop and monitor academic, personal and professional targets.

2.28   The development of students' employability skills is a priority for the College. Academic and support staff have roles in providing opportunities for students to interact with employers and employment environments in addition to structured sessions aimed at developing employability skills. The College services and systems provide a support framework which enables Expectation B4 to be met in theory.

2.29   The review team evaluated the arrangements in place by scrutinising documentation, minutes of meetings, student guidance information and programme specifications, and met a range of support staff and students from across the provision.

2.30   The College is committed to enabling all of its students to achieve their potential and provides a wide range of support services and resources. These support students in learning, applying and reflecting upon the skills needed for success within their chosen field and in achieving their qualification. These services include learning resources, personal student support, careers and information technology. Additionally, all students have access to the learning resources at the relevant awarding body. Support staff are aware of the relevant Expectations of the Quality Code and have had staff development sessions to discuss how they respond to the Expectations. All staff have an annual performance review where additional staff development and training requirements are identified. Students spoke positively about the effectiveness and accessibility of the support services available to them and commended the staff in the level of support provided. The College's approach to the support requirements of its higher education students is determined and monitored through its robust annual self-assessment and quality improvement process.

2.31   Disability support is available to all students through PSS which includes a dyslexia adviser. Students can be referred to PSS in a number of ways, either before enrolment or while on a programme. Students can also self-refer to it at any time during their programme of study. The College produces a helpful guide for tutors on supporting students with potential learning difficulties.

2.32   Students have regular group and individual personal tutorials where their academic progress is discussed. The range of information available to students on the VLE includes teaching resources, student support information, student news, timetables, attendance data, grades, learning targets and progress reviews. Tutors are proactive in contacting students whenever they have concerns about their progress, and students highly value this.

2.33   The College places a strong emphasis on students developing their employability skills. In addition, the Learner Experience Team and the careers office liaise closely with personal tutors to arrange additional skills development sessions and an annual graduate futures fair. Tutors use work-place examples, simulated assessment centres and case studies to introduce and develop employability skills in their students. These assessments are designed in conjunction with employers. Students place a strong emphasis on the importance of the development of employability skills and recognise and value tutors' experience and connection with industry. The review team identifies as **good practice** the highly effective pastoral and academic support provided by personal tutors which enhances students' academic progression and employment prospects.

2.34   The review team concludes that Expectation B4 is met and the associated level of risk is low because the College offers a wide range of support services, which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.35   The College's commitment to student engagement and the various opportunities available for their involvement is outlined in the College's Learner Engagement Strategy. The College recognises that its strategy will evolve over time and allow for continued improvement to further enhance student engagement. The College provides a wide range of mechanisms for students to give feedback on their learning experience.

2.36   Student engagement includes focus groups, surveys and a class representative system. Representatives are encouraged to attend staff team and centre meetings. In addition to this, elected student governors are engaged with College-wide issues. Students are made aware of these opportunities through the Learner Engagement Strategy and student handbooks. Student representatives receive a Class Representative Handbook which helps them to understand their role. These opportunities enable the College to meet Expectation B5 in theory.

2.37   The review team considered the methods in place for student engagement and reviewed information available to staff and students, including minutes of meetings where class representatives were present, and examples of student feedback. The team discussed student engagement with senior staff, academic and support staff, and students.

2.38   The College Learner Engagement Strategy outlines an appropriate commitment to ensuring the engagement of students with their College experience. The Strategy, while evolving, encourages effective processes for greater learner engagement and ensuring the student voice is used for quality improvements. The Strategy has been updated since its original development in 2010, its aims and objectives have been reviewed, and progress is monitored annually. Students are engaged individually through various feedback mechanisms, such as College surveys, the National Student Survey (NSS), and end-of-module evaluations. These formal processes inform the College of areas of good practice and improvement, and are supported by frequent informal contact with staff. Student feedback is used in the development of module leader reports where enhancement opportunities are highlighted. These views inform the College's annual self-assessment process. Class representatives are elected from each cohort and participate regularly in team meetings, where they can discuss course-related issues. Centre meetings allow representatives to discuss both programme and College-related issues. Class representatives are also invited to contribute to an annual departmental review.

2.39   The Class Representative Handbook clearly explains the role and outlines mutual expectations and is intended for use in training student representatives. Although student representatives were largely unaware of the Handbook they have a clear understanding of the expectations of the role and stated that support could be readily obtained from tutors and the Higher Education Programme Manager.

2.40   Information is disseminated to students informally through discussions with staff, through representatives and formally using a 'You said, we did' information feedback notice. Staff and students gave examples of how student engagement has positively impacted on the student experience, including changes to course structure or resourcing. Students stated that their views are valued and often result in effective actions to improve their experience.

2.41   The College's student engagement focus is on the effective collection and use of student feedback. However, students are mainly asked for comment on their experience rather than being actively involved in the College's deliberative processes. Although processes for providing feedback are effective and valued by both staff and students there is less emphasis placed on formally involving students in discussions as partners in the decision-making processes. The review team **recommends** that, by September 2015, the College increases the involvement of students in the formal quality assurance and enhancement processes.

2.42   Overall, the College actively and effectively seeks feedback from its students and responds appropriately. The review team concludes that Expectation B5 is met but, owing to the lack of student representation in the formal deliberative processes, the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

2.43   The College and its awarding bodies have appropriate assessment policies, regulations and procedures in place which are aligned to the Quality Code and the FHEQ. There is a thorough and effective assessment strategy for each programme which is approved by the awarding bodies during the validation and revalidation processes. This ensures that the contents and timings of module assessments are relevant and valid.

2.44   The College's comprehensive Higher Education Assessment Policy outlines management roles, provides guidelines on internal verification, marking, feedback and moderation. Assignments are agreed with the awarding bodies and external examiners at the beginning of the academic year. Assessment Boards are the responsibility of the awarding bodies, and members of the relevant university and College staff attend these meetings along with the external examiners. There is a published accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) process which is based on the relevant awarding body's processes, although as yet no students have applied for accreditation of APEL. These policies and procedures enable the College to meet Expectation B6 in theory.

2.45   The review team examined College documentation relating to assessment, including the self-assessment reports and Quality Improvement Plans, and held meetings with staff, students and representatives from the awarding bodies.

2.46   The College's Higher Education Assessment Policy provides clear and comprehensive guidelines on the process, including expectations on internal verification, marking, feedback and moderation. Assignments are agreed at the beginning of the academic year in discussion with the relevant awarding body and external examiners.

2.47   Summative assessments are aligned to the module learning outcomes and supported through formative assessment. Assessment tasks are internally and externally verified. A schedule of assessments is created to provide an overview for students, to allow them to plan, and to ensure a well-balanced timetable. Assessment guidance is provided in student handbooks and in the module specifications. This includes assessment criteria and information on submission, grading, academic malpractice and mitigating circumstances. There is a robust moderation and second marking scheme which operates successfully and follows the procedures outlined in the assessment policy. The College has oversight of the process through its own Assessment Committee.

2.48   There is a good range and variety of assessment tasks. Assessment and feedback practices are targeted and individualised for students. Students are supported by one-to-one tutorials, personal learning plans and progress review meetings. Initial assignments are used to identify student needs and provide support for individual students. Many student assignments are submitted electronically and a plagiarism-detection software is used.

2.49   External examiners' reports confirm the security of the examination processes and endorse the quality of feedback and support, and the accuracy of marking. External examiners report that a wide variety of assessment methods are built into the programmes. Where issues have been raised in external examiners' reports these have been addressed, and actions taken and monitored through the quality improvement planning process.

2.50 Overall, the review team concludes that the assessment processes and procedures are fit for purpose and effective. External examiners confirm that assessments are at the appropriate level and a range and variety of assessment is provided to students. The team concludes that Expectation B6 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: **Met**
Level of risk: **Low**

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.51   The College follows the universities' procedures for the appointment and induction of external examiners. External examiners are nominated, appointed, prepared for their role and terminated by the awarding bodies. The relevant universities retain responsibility for ensuring that examiners submit an annual report and provide informative comments and recommendations.

2.52   The College has a range of internal procedures to support external examining. Throughout the year external examiners have access to assignment briefs and marked student work through the College's VLE. Examiners are also able to provide informal feedback prior to attending examination boards. External examiners' reports are sent to the Higher Education Programme Manager at the College by the relevant awarding body. The College is required to send a response to the awarding body. This response is shared with the external examiner who is then also able to comment on the appropriateness of this response.

2.53   External examiners' comments are integrated into the College's annual cycle of programme monitoring and quality improvement planning. Actions to address recommendations and ways of disseminating good practice are identified and monitored. The use made of external examiners enables the College to meet Expectation B7 in theory.

2.54   The review team considered how the processes outlined above operate in practice by scrutinising selected external examiners' reports and action plans, looking at relevant policies on the induction of examiners, minutes of relevant committees and correspondence, as well as by meeting staff and students. The team tested how examiners' reports are used and responded to by the College.

2.55   The review team found that the College engages positively with the awarding bodies' requirements relating to external examiners. Reports are received by the College's Quality Unit and distributed to programme teams though the Higher Education Programme Manager who has responsibility for producing an action plan and working with programme teams in responding to any issues raised. Responses are collated by the Quality Unit and forwarded to the relevant awarding body which then communicates directly with the external examiner.

2.56   Staff are aware of external examiners' role and of the College's internal systems for responding to issues raised in their reports. The College has effective internal systems for capturing external examiners' comments and ensuring that they are acted upon through the Self-Assessment Report and the Quality Improvement Plan. Progress against actions identified is regularly monitored by programme teams and through departmental review meetings.

2.57   Students are aware of the role and responsibilities of the external examiners for their programme and know where to find information about them. However, the review team found that some of the information and documentation on examiners published on the VLE is not comprehensive, and the College is working to address this. Students are aware that external examiners produce an annual report for each programme and stated that reports are available on the College's VLE.

2.58   Overall, the review team considers that the College's processes for identifying actions and responding to issues arising from external examiners' reports are effective. Appropriate consideration is given to reports within the quality assurance process at programme and College level.

2.59   The review team therefore concludes that Expectation B7 is met. The associated level of risk is low because the College has systems in place that allow it effectively to identify and respond to issues raised by external examiners.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.60   Ultimate responsibility for periodic reviews of programmes lies with the awarding bodies. The College's annual self-assessment process takes into consideration feedback from students, module leaders and external examiners. It also considers key data relating to the performance of the programme. Each programme produces a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which includes a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Higher Education Programme Manager uses the SAR as the basis for drawing up an annual report in the template required by each awarding body. The SAR and QIP are presented to the Academic Standards Committee and the Quality and Standards Committee of the Governing Body. The QIP is monitored and updated throughout the year in addition to the three formal reviews. The approach the College takes towards programme monitoring and periodic review enables it to meet Expectation B8 in theory.

2.61   In testing the College's processes, the review team met senior staff, academic and support staff and students. In addition, the team looked at minutes from the Academic Standards Committee and the Quality and Standards Committee of the corporation and the SARs and QIPs.

2.62   The College's internal process is a thorough, systematic and effective method for monitoring and reviewing programmes. An end-of-module report takes into account comments from the module leader, student feedback and success rates. Module reports are discussed at boards, before being included in the College's annual monitoring process and reported in the individual programme SAR. Areas for improvement are identified and inform a QIP. This is under continuous scrutiny by the module leader and formally reviewed three times a year. The process for annual monitoring and review for most programmes is effectively overseen by the Higher Education Programme Manager and Head of Faculty, in conjunction with the Quality Unit. For the City University London foundation year programmes, monitoring and review is managed in conjunction with the University's Link Tutor and the College's Head of Faculty and Course Co-ordinator.

2.63   Overall, there are effective processes in place for the routine monitoring and review of individual programmes and for providing cross-College oversight. Actions for improvement are well planned and monitored. The review team concludes that Expectation B8 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.64   The College has varying responsibilities for complaints and academic appeals dependent on the programme of study and awarding body. The College has a clear complaints policy and students confirm that they can make a complaint or appeal without being disadvantaged, and that information is readily available. For programmes in partnership with City University London and Sheffield Hallam University the College accepts shared responsibility for complaints and academic appeals, using College procedures where possible.

2.65   For the Foundation Degree in Accounting franchised from London South Bank University (LSBU), complaints and appeals are handled by the awarding body. However, for all other LSBU programmes complaints are the responsibility of the College and academic appeals are dealt with by the University, using its academic regulations. The College Complaints Procedure outlines how students can raise issues and complaints. This is supported by the College assessment appeals process, within the College Assessment Policy, which sets out how students can appeal against assessment decisions. These arrangements enable the College to meet Expectation B9 in theory.

2.66   In order to test this process the review team looked at information about responsibility for complaints and appeals, including the College Complaints Procedure and the Assessment Appeals Policy, along with information available to students. The team also discussed complaints and appeals procedures with staff and students to test how well the policies and procedures are understood and implemented.

2.67   Complaints are initially dealt with informally by tutors or class representatives, wherever possible. Formal complaints are reported in writing to the curriculum manager, progressing up the management chain to the Principal if resolution is not satisfactory. Ultimate decisions are made by the Governing Body, whose decision is final.

2.68   The College's Assessment Appeals Policy provides appropriate procedures for academic appeals, stating clear timeframes for each stage of the process, and discusses the use of the awarding bodies' appeals mechanisms. These are used when the College's processes have been exhausted, and if students continue to be dissatisfied. Students are made aware of the complaints and appeals process through the student handbooks and induction.

2.69   The informal procedures and staff open-door policy enable early resolution of most complaints, with both students and staff advocating the use of tutorials or class discussion when issues became apparent. Students feel they can raise issues informally with members of staff and that concerns are generally resolved effectively in an acceptable timescale. Students also stated an awareness of where to access formal procedures and support if required. College complaints are monitored and reported to the Governing Body.

2.70   College documentation and discussions with staff demonstrate a conflicting understanding of the process and procedures for academic appeals. Information provided was contradictory between the College's checklists of responsibilities, the memorandums of agreement with the awarding bodies, and the self-evaluation document. No information on

academic appeals is provided in the current student handbooks, although this is available on the VLE. During the review visit the College clarified its responsibilities with each awarding body, and action is being taken to ensure that students receive accurate information. The team **recommends** that the College ensures that, by June 2015, information about the process for academic appeals is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy, and communicated effectively to staff and students.

2.71   The review team concludes that students have been unable to access accurate information regarding academic appeals and here has been conflicting understanding among staff about the College's responsibilities. However, the risk is considered moderate as rapid action can be taken to ensure that the matter is rectified. The team concludes therefore that Expectation B9 is not met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.72   The College is not a degree-awarding body and does not deliver learning opportunities with other organisations. However, the College has responsibility for the effective management of its arrangements in the form of work-based learning or work experience, where learning takes place within the work environment and constitutes an integral aspect of the student's programme of study.

2.73   The College is committed to embedding work-related learning across all of its programmes. Its aims include the improvement of students performance at work, or preparing them for employment. The College places great value on its contacts with industry and employers to provide a range of employability and enhancement activities, including guest speakers, simulations for assignments, case studies, and mentoring relationships for students. These activities are not linked to the achievement of academic credit. The processes implemented by the College allow Expectation B10 to be met in theory.

2.74   The review team considered how the processes and interactions with employers operate in practice by considering examples of reports and action plans provided by the College, by looking at relevant meeting notes, and through discussions with staff, students and employers.

2.75   In meetings with the review team, staff and students outlined the various and extensive opportunities which are available to support the enrichment of their academic programmes. These activities provide students with experience of the workplace and the skills required by employers in their chosen specialist fields. Employers verify the interactions which they have with the College, such as workplace visits, the provision of case studies and workshops for module assessments. These activities provide valuable opportunities to enhance students' understanding of the workplace and the requirements of employment.

2.76   The College does not rely on any other organisation for the delivery of learning opportunities which lead directly to the achievement of credit. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation B10 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols.
This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.77   The College does not offer research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.78   In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. Most applicable Expectations have been met and risk is judged low in seven out of 10 areas. One Expectation, B9, has not been met and the associated risk is considered moderate. This is because of a lack of understanding of the academic appeals process.

2.79   There are two examples of good practice in Expectation B3 concerning the integrated and effective use of the virtual learning environment, and B4 the highly effective support provided for students.

2.80   The team identifies three recommendations. In Expectation B1 to formalise the process for developing modules prior to validation, in Expectation B5 to involve students in the formal quality assurance and enhancement processes, and Expectation B9 to ensure the academic appeals process is understood.

2.81   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

3   Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, *Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision*

Findings

3.1   The College provides a wide range of information for stakeholders, which include prospective students, current students, staff and employers. The College website is the main source of information where the mission is clearly displayed. There is a separate section for higher education. This provides information on the different awarding bodies and on open days, and has links to other websites, including to UCAS and to key information sets on Unistats. Other important sources of information include the prospectus and the College's VLE which contains the student handbooks.

3.2   Information for the public and prospective students includes the Higher Education and Access Guide, covering all higher level courses, the Adult Learners Guide, with a specific section on higher education programmes, and the International Prospectus. These are all available to download from the website and contain relevant College and programme information. Additional information is provided by the Learner Experience Team, supported by curriculum staff. An application guide is available to students electronically and additional information is provided for current students through the College Student Handbook, Higher Education Student Handbook, module handbooks and through the VLE. Accuracy of information is ensured through regular consultation between the marketing team and curriculum staff, and all information is checked before publication. The information available and supporting processes enable the College to meet Expectation C in theory.

3.3   The review team tested that information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy by scrutinising a wide range of information published in hard copy and electronically, on the website and the VLE. Additionally, the team had discussions with students and staff, including the marketing staff team.

3.4   The generic student handbook and Higher Education Student Handbook clearly outline expectations of both the student and the College. Elements of the Student Code and Charter are included in both handbooks, discussed at induction and available online. The lack of accurate information available about academic appeals is addressed under Expectation B9, and the need to formalise and document the internal processes for programme design and approval under Expectation A3.1.

3.5   Processes for ensuring that information is fit for purpose, accurate and trustworthy are at present largely informal, although effective in practice. Students are satisfied that the information they receive is relevant and up to date. The marketing team is responsible for the production of information for the public and the management of the College website. A specific member of the team is dedicated to supporting higher education publicity and marketing. Programme information is recorded on a standard College template and updated by curriculum staff. All public information produced is checked by teaching staff where appropriate, and is checked by the Higher Education Programme Manager and the Head of Faculty before publication. Accuracy of information is also monitored through regular meetings and consultation. Marketing team meetings show discussion about amendments to information and website content. In line with the desirable recommendation from the QAA

review in 2010 the College has introduced annual meetings between the learner experience team manager and a UCAS representative.

3.6 There are currently two advanced VLE practitioners within the higher education team who have developed a comprehensive handbook to aid College staff in using electronic communication appropriately and effectively. The handbook sets out the minimum expected standards, alongside a standard layout for content. This ensures consistency and is monitored by the Higher Education Programme Manager. Students praise the effectiveness of the VLE in providing current and coherent information. The integrated and systematic use of the VLE as an area of good practice is addressed under Expectation B3*.*

3.7 Overall, the review team concludes that Expectation C is met and the associated level of risk is low. Information available is generally fit for purpose and reliable and there are processes in place which ensure accuracy and trustworthiness. Information is updated and monitored regularly. Students confirm that the information provided to them is helpful, accurate and comprehensive.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.8.   In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk low.

3.9.   Information published is generally fit for purpose and trustworthy. Processes for the development and verification of information are understood by staff. Students confirm that information is comprehensive, accessible and helpful to them and provides them with sound information to support their learning. Further work needs to be done to ensure that information on appeals is consistent and accurate and that documented processes for programme design and approval are in place. These are addressed in other sections of the report.

3.10.   The review team therefore concludes that the quality of the information produced about its higher education provision **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1. The College employs a range of mechanisms which capture and address issues and areas for improvement. This demonstrates a commitment to the development and widening of the students' learning opportunities. The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policy and lesson observation process support the enhancement of learning opportunities. There are many examples of extracurricular activities and good practice which enrich the students' learning opportunities. This commitment is identified in several key strategy and policy documents.

4.2. The Higher Education Strategy's stated aim is to deliver and enhance the higher education student experience through effective oversight and management and curriculum and staff development. Continual improvement is based on a College-wide model and the strategy sets out priorities to improve and develop provision over time. The College has produced a detailed Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and is monitoring progress. The arrangements currently in place allow the College to meet the Expectation in theory.

4.3. The review team examined key documents, including the Higher Education Strategy, the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policy, self-assessment documents at programme and institutional level, and the lesson observation policy, as well as meeting students and staff at all levels within the College.

4.4. Deliberate steps are taken within the College to ensure there is continued improvement in the quality of the students' opportunities and experiences. These processes are reviewed and monitored in the College's Self-Assessment Report and areas for improvement are identified in the QIP. Progress against actions is monitored and reviewed regularly by management committees.

4.5. Over the last two years, cross-College initiatives have been developed as an outcome of the quality improvement process. This has enhanced students' learning opportunities. The College designated 2013-14 a Year of Learning, when, working in close partnership with the Association of Colleges, it invested substantial sums of money and time enhancing learning and teaching practices. Staff coaching programmes were developed to encourage and improve innovative approaches to learning and teaching. In 2014-15 this approach has been consolidated further though the Making Learning Count initiative, developing and establishing a team of teaching and learning coaches, observing lessons and supporting teaching staff. The College has made a significant investment in resources for teaching and learning in recent years, and is currently extensively refurbishing its Victoria Centre to provide a hub for the majority of its higher education provision.

4.6. The are many examples of extracurricular activities designed to improve and develop the students' learning experiences. Talks and seminars have been held in the College to support module delivery, and the Learner Experience Team deliver enrichment activities as part of tutorials. Students spoke positively of the processes for engagement and for having their voice heard and responded to, with evidence that their comments lead to further changes and enhancements. Teaching teams have visited other institutions to see and share good practice.

4.7.   The review team considers that there are effective processes in place to develop and enrich the students' experience. Enhancement is implicit in many of the College's aims, priorities and practices, with examples of enhancement taking place. However, the Higher Education Strategy does not refer explicitly to how enhancement is deliberately addressed or embedded, or how various improvement activities are coherently drawn together. The mechanisms in place for compliance and quality assurance could provide the foundations for a more strategic approach, supported by the strong higher education management team. The review team **recommends** that, by September 2015, the College consolidates the various improvement activities to provide a more strategic approach to enhancement.

4.8.   Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low. The College takes deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities, although further work to consolidate the various improvement activities would provide a more strategic approach to enhancement.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.9.   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified. The team considers the expectation to have been met, based on the extent to which the College has introduced and integrated a set of initiatives to enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities.

4.10.   However, the College's approach to the monitoring and review of enhancement activity is at an emerging stage. Enhancement is driven informally rather than systematically consolidated within the higher education structures with explicit roles and responsibilities.

4.11.   Therefore, the team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

5   Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   The College's core objectives place great value on ensuring that the programmes it delivers improve the employment prospects of all of its students. Senior managers state that the College plans the curriculum to ensure that it integrates employment and business opportunities to help students develop and consolidate their learning and acquire new employability skills.

5.2   All foundation degree and honours programmes validated by London South Bank University incorporate common 20 credit, level 5 modules in either 'Developing Professional Practice' or 'Evaluating Professional Practice'. The assessments for these modules involve some interaction with employers through students' attendance at a mock assessment centre. For programmes of other awarding bodies the students are either already employed or have work-related modules or projects integrated as part of their assessments. Alternatively, a reflective management practice module develops these skills.

5.3   The College provides a wide range of employability initiatives which allow students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the skills which employers are looking for in their graduates. These initiatives are based on exposure to employers and their working environment as part of the enrichment programmes associated with all higher education programmes delivered at the College. Placement or work-based learning modules are not integrated into the programmes offered, as many of the College's students are employed while studying, and these opportunities are not linked to the delivery, assessment or achievement of credit.

5.4   The College analyses employment information through the national Destination of Leavers in Higher Education survey and through an internal survey. Over 90 per cent of students completing their qualification in 2013-14 remained or progressed into employment, entered a graduate training programme or progressed to another programme of study, either at the College or at another institution.

5.5   The Learner Experience Team works closely with higher education staff to provide a programme aimed at developing employability skills, which includes professional speakers, public speaking workshops, and subject-specific skill-based sessions. Additionally, the careers team offers one-to-one appointments bookable by students, and hosts an annual Graduate Fair which allows students to interact with potential employers. Several students had been offered employment as a direct result of these fairs.

5.6   Teaching staff have strong connections with industry and provided numerous examples of how employers are involved in enriching the curriculum for students. These activities include guest speakers, off-site visits, assignment simulations, case studies and projects and participation at the annual assessment centre. Individual companies have also made presentations to student groups to promote their graduate schemes and a number of initiatives. Students highly appreciate these opportunities and state strongly that they contribute positively to their acquisition of employability skills. Employers recognise the value of these initiatives both in the development of student employability skills and for themselves as a networking opportunity.

5.7   The College consults industry representatives, employers and relevant professional bodies during the process of programme development and approval, and this, together with their involvement in programme delivery, has been commended by the awarding body during its validation process.

5.8   Many of the College's students are part-time, some of whom are on day release from their employment. Other students are on a block release mode of attendance and one group from the armed forces are distance learners. The College ensures that all student groups have access to relevant and current employability initiatives either through their own workplaces, through sessions delivered during their time at the College, or through the use of the VLE. The Careers Service and the Personal Support Services are available to students for individual appointments or via telephone consultations. The distance-learning programme, which was developed in collaboration with the armed forces, includes a professional development module which aims to develop the skills students require when looking to find employment after leaving the services.

5.9   At the student meeting the review team heard that students recognise and value the employability skills they gain through their studies at the College and the connections that their tutors have with industry.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 29-32 of the [Higher Education Review handbook](#)

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

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

Award
A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Blended learning
Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-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 (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning
A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.
See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award
The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning

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 our review processes.

Expectations
Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.
See also **distance learning**.

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: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

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 audit and review processes.

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.

Multiple awards
An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition
A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

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.

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

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.

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.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard
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** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)
An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

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