



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of The Condé Nast Publications Ltd t/a Condé Nast College of Fashion and Design

March 2019

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at The Condé Nast Publications Ltd trading as Condé Nast College of Fashion and Design. The review took place from 11 to 12 March 2019 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Sally Dixon
- Mr Richard Samuels

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not 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 (Alternative Providers) 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
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#)² and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review

Key findings

Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body and other awarding organisation **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**.

- The strong industry links which enrich the students' learning experience and strengthen employability (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation**.

By September 2019:

- formulate a staff development policy that articulates the College's approach towards supporting learning, teaching and assessment (Expectation B3).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students:

- the steps the College is taking to formalise the staff appraisal process (Expectation B3)
- the steps the College is taking to widen the choice of academic resources available to students (Expectation B4)
- the steps the College is taking to embed recently introduced processes and documentation with regard to student placements (Expectation B10)
- the steps the College is taking to ensure that information for students is fit for purpose (Information).

About the provider

Condé Nast College of Fashion and Design (the College) was founded in 2013 and is a small, specialist higher education provider located in central London. The College has recently moved from Condé Nast Britain and become part of Condé Nast International, a pre-eminent upmarket publisher in the fashion industry and home to some of the world's most celebrated media brands. Following the changes in the Condé Nast business the College is undertaking a major strategic review and is in the process of revising its Strategic Plan, governance and management structures.

The College's mission is to provide world-class fashion education and a place where the fashion industry's new generation of talented promoters, creative directors, stylists, editors, publishers, journalists and business leaders are launching their careers. It aims to ensure that students have a greater understanding of how the fashion and fashion media industries really work and develop a more informed idea of the careers and opportunities available in the industry.

The College offers three higher education programmes. The level 4 Vogue Diploma in Fashion, which has been running since 2013, is awarded by Gateway Qualifications. The College is a 'recognised centre' for the delivery of Gateway Qualifications provision. It has 'direct claim status' which allows certification of qualifications with only one annual monitoring check. The College also delivers a two-year intensive BA (Hons) Fashion Communication programme, which launched in 2016. This was followed in 2018 by an MA in Fashion Media Practice. Both courses are validated by the University of Buckingham. Two new master's level programmes are expected to be launched in 2019.

Higher education student numbers are small. Fifty-six students are enrolled on the BA (Hons) Fashion Communication programme and 11 students on the MA in Fashion Media Practice. The Diploma in Fashion has nine students. The student body is predominantly female with most students coming from the EU and overseas. There is a small teaching team of eight permanent full and part-time staff as well as an extensive number of guest lecturers.

Programmes have a strong industry focus with practice-based learning and embedded employability skills development due to the unique level of industry access to the parent company's facilities and resources. Students are connected to the fashion industry in a variety of engaging ways, from industry-set projects and weekly guest speakers to external activities and visits. This connectivity is central to the College's higher education provision.

The College underwent its last QAA Higher Education Review (Plus) in 2015, which identified five areas of good practice, nine recommendations and an affirmation. The College has since built on the areas of good practice identified and has taken appropriate action to fully address the recommendations and affirmation.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

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* (FHEQ) 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 does not have degree awarding powers. It works with two awarding partners, the University of Buckingham (UoB) and Gateway Qualifications (GQ), to ensure that each qualification is allocated to the appropriate level. The College is responsible for designing programmes and modules, with the awarding partners taking responsibility for validation and ensuring that requirements of the respective qualifications frameworks, that is *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), are met.

1.2 The awarding partners also take responsibility for ensuring that the College operates in accordance to their specified policies and procedures and provide a check on whether standards are maintained in programme delivery and assessment. Internal processes for assuring appropriate subject benchmarking are outlined in the College's Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Handbook and in supporting programme guidance documentation. The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) is the internal body responsible for overseeing academic standards.

1.3 Direct communication between UoB and the College is facilitated through the University's Head of Collaborations and a Link Tutor. To evaluate academic standards, UoB use external examiners who visit twice a year. GQ provide support with programme development through a qualifications developer and use an external quality assurer who visits annually. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.4 The review team read validation and external examiners' reports and examined a range of programme and module specifications. The team also discussed the arrangements with the awarding partners with senior and academic staff.

1.5 The review team found that the College is effective in discharging its responsibilities for allocating qualifications to the appropriate level. Relevant Subject Benchmark Statements are used in curriculum design. A challenge for the College has been establishing appropriate benchmarking for fashion programmes due to the absence of discrete benchmark statements. In programme documentation, Subject Benchmark Statements have been built up around the fashion and art and design-related disciplines of business and media. Also, to ensure accuracy of benchmarking, the Dean collaborates closely with counterparts from the awarding partners to ensure the formulation of suitable benchmarking.

1.6 The arrangements with the awarding partners secure threshold academic standards. Assessment policies across programmes are set by the awarding partners to which the College strictly adheres, as evidenced in the external examiner reports. Reports from GQ's external quality assurer and UoB's external examiners also provide confirmation of the equivalent academic standards being maintained through the assessment process. Minutes of the College's ASC demonstrate that the College's internal structures are responsive to comments that arise from these reports.

1.7 The College demonstrates alignment with the relevant qualifications' frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements, and the collaboration with the awarding partners ensures that threshold academic standards are being maintained. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

1.8 The College's academic framework and regulations follow the requirements of the awarding partners. Academic regulations for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are modelled on those of UoB, suitably adapted with the consent of the awarding body to suit the specific requirements of the College. UoB maintains responsibility for examination boards from which degrees are awarded.

1.9 The College's internal academic governance arrangements are overseen by the ASC. The committee is responsible for setting and executing policy and procedures relating to academic standards and is attended by representatives of the senior executive team, staff and students. In addition, the Academic Planning Meetings led by the Dean provide scrutiny of the provision and academic standards while the College Committee which includes academic and professional support staff takes responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the College. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.10 The review team examined the effectiveness of the arrangements by looking at a range of documentation including the terms of reference of committees in the revised governance structure and minutes of committees. The team also discussed academic standards and the functioning of the committee structure with senior and academic staff and students.

1.11 The College's governance arrangements ensure that academic standards are effectively being maintained. At the time of the review, the governance structure was being reviewed as part a wider organisational restructure. This will be resulting in changes to the roles of senior staff and reporting lines at executive level. Draft documentation highlighted the proposed adjustments to the governance structure. The proposals are logical and provide the opportunity to revise and update the current governance arrangements.

1.12 Academic regulations and quality assurance processes and procedures are articulated clearly in the Academic Standards and Quality Handbook. The terms of reference and reporting lines of academic committees ensure that academic standards are appropriately monitored. Committee minutes provide evidence that the responsibilities of the committees are understood, and that the College is effective in discharging its responsibilities for maintaining academic standards. External examiners' reports and reviews conducted by the awarding partners confirm that quality processes are protecting academic standards.

1.13 The College is working cooperatively and effectively with its awarding partners. Formal links with UoB are more developed than with GQ, in part reflecting the College's alignment of arrangements with those of UoB as the primary awarding body. The College stated that links with GQ could be enhanced and is looking to build on current arrangements with the GQ quality assurer.

1.14 The College works effectively with the awarding partners, and the committee structure ensures compliance with the appropriate academic frameworks and regulations. The Expectation 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

1.15 All awards offered at the College are underpinned by programme specifications. The awarding partners are responsible for maintaining definitive programme documentation, but the College is responsible for their development prior to programme approval. The College also ensures that staff and students have access to the final version. Programme documentation is stored on the College shared drive and is used as the key point of reference for delivery and assessment.

1.16 The College is responsible for ensuring that students receive the correct data on their performance, and for maintaining accurate records of assessment. It is the responsibility of the awarding partners to hold registration lists and definitive results from examination boards. The awarding partners also provide transcripts and certificates. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.17 The review team assessed the College's approach to meeting this Expectation by scrutinising the relevant programme documentation and by talking to senior, academic and professional support staff.

1.18 The College is fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to this Expectation. Arrangements with awarding partners are transparent and effective. Staff understand the division of responsibilities for the development and maintenance of definitive programme documentation. Documentation that the review team examined provides evidence that validation and monitoring arrangements appropriately ensure that programme information is accurately maintained. The programme outlines and module specifications provide comprehensive reference points for staff and students, with students confirming that programme-related material is available through the virtual learning environment (VLE) and in programme handbooks.

1.19 The College maintains definitive and comprehensive records while complying with the responsibilities set by the awarding partners. The review team concludes that the Expectation 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

1.20 Responsibility for the development of programmes rests with the College whereas the awarding partners have responsibility for programme approval. The College follows the procedures set out by the UoB with regard to the design and approval of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The University's collaborations delivery plan sets out the responsibilities of the parties with regard to programme development and approval and the approval of modifications to existing programmes. The development process for GQ approved programmes is set out in the awarding organisation's Qualification Development Proposal. The College articulates the application of the awarding partners' procedures through its Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Handbook. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.21 The review team considered the effectiveness of these processes and procedures by examining programme specifications, minutes of relevant committee meetings, the College's Academic Standards and Quality Handbook and awarding partner processes. The team also held meetings with senior and academic staff.

1.22 All matters pertaining to the setting of academic standards at programme approval are managed effectively in the partnerships. The College fulfils its obligations with regard to the development of programmes that are presented for approval to the awarding partners. Validation reports for UoB provision demonstrate that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold standards and the requirements of the University's academic framework and regulations. Module specifications developed by the College include information on the type of assessments and these are linked to module learning outcomes. The GQ programme specifications clearly outline the learning outcomes and assessment methodologies.

1.23 The College adheres to the requirements of the awarding partners for programme approval and has appropriate processes in place to ensure that staff understand and enact their responsibilities in this regard. Within the context of the partnership agreements which assign limited responsibility to the College for the approval of programmes, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.24 The College is responsible for the setting of assessments. Assessment requirements are included in programme and module specifications which are approved by the awarding partners as part of the programme approval process. The College has in place assessment policies both for UoB and GQ programmes. There is also an internal quality assurance process for the verification of assessment briefs. The achievement of learning outcomes is confirmed at examination boards. For UoB provision these are held by the awarding body and attended by College staff and external examiners. The College holds its own examination boards for GQ programmes and the external quality assessor attends. Examination board and external examiner arrangements for all provision are outlined in the Academic Standards and Quality Handbook. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.25 The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing documentation such as programme specifications and the College's Academic Standards and Quality Handbook. The team also held meetings with senior and academic staff, and students.

1.26 The College adheres to the requirements of the awarding partners with staff members and students demonstrating an awareness of the assessment processes used. Examination board minutes for UoB and GQ provision confirm that credit is only awarded where relevant learning outcomes have been met. For UoB provision College staff attend boards chaired by the University and held at the College. External examiner reports confirm that where credit and qualifications are awarded academic standards have been met.

1.27 On the basis of the documentation, which it has seen and its meetings with staff and students, the review team concludes that the College fulfils its responsibilities with regard to the award of credit and qualifications. The Expectation is met 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 works under the procedures set by its awarding partners for programme monitoring and review. Monitoring and review of programmes is conducted through the completion of annual programme review reports for University of Buckingham provision. There is no requirement by GQ for annual monitoring, however, the College produces its own programme annual monitoring and evaluation report which covers all of its provision. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.29 The review team tested the Expectation by examining the processes and associated documentation for programme monitoring and review. The also team held meetings with different groups of staff and students.

1.30 Annual programme monitoring reports for all provision are routinely produced to templates. Reports draw on a range of sources such as feedback and actions arising from Student Steering Committees, internal and external surveys and external examiner reports. The reports demonstrate that the monitoring processes in place adhere to the requirements of the awarding partners and confirm that the threshold academic standards set are being appropriately maintained. While there is variation in terms of the reporting requirements from each awarding partner, there is a core set of information such as admissions, performance indicators, external examiner reports and the associated responses, and student feedback that is covered in the College's course annual monitoring and evaluation report, which is considered internally by the Academic Standards Committee. Its content is effectively used in the evaluation of programmes and links to action planning and the identification of good practice.

1.31 The procedures in place at the College with regard to the monitoring and review of programmes and their application enables the review team to conclude that the Expectation 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

1.32 The College's responsibility for the use of external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards is limited. The awarding partners make use of independent external experts at programme approval events and appoint external examiners to advise on whether academic standards are being maintained. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.33 The review team tested the Expectation by considering documentation such as validation reports, committee meeting minutes and external examiner reports. The team also met with senior and academic staff.

1.34 Validation reports confirm that appropriate independent external expertise is being utilised in the setting of academic standards at programme approval for the programmes the College presented for validation. Through the awarding partners the College receives feedback from external examiners on the maintenance of academic standards. Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee and College Committee show that the College appropriately considers and actions these reports. This is verified through the annual programme monitoring process.

1.35 The College fulfils the limited responsibilities it has for this Expectation. On the basis of the documentation seen and the meetings held with staff the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.36 In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. All seven Expectations in this judgement area have been met and the level of risk is judged to be low for all of them. There are no recommendations, affirmations or good practice in this judgement area.

1.37 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body and other awarding organisation at the provider **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, Development and Approval

Findings

2.1 With regard to programme design, development and approval all of the College's programmes are subject to the overarching operational processes, regulatory and documentation requirements of the respective awarding partner. For UoB provision the College designs and develops the programmes which are then approved by the University in a formal validation event. The Academic Standards and Quality Handbook and the programme design, development and approval guidance set out the principles of programme design and development and the procedures for this.

2.2 For UoB programmes the College develops a business case and rationale which require approval in principle by the CNI College Management Team. Following this, a programme specification and module descriptors are developed and internally scrutinised before submission to the awarding body for approval. As a recognised centre the College sets the curriculum and the learning outcomes for GQ programmes, which are approved by the awarding organisation. Qualifications are bespoke, restricted for the sole use by the College and are approved by Ofqual.

2.3 The College maintains strategic oversight of programme design and development through the Academic Standards Committee and the Senior Executive Committee. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.4 The review team tested the Expectation by scrutinising documentation associated with the processes for programme design and approval. The team also held meetings with a range of staff and students.

2.5 The development of new programmes is infrequent at the College. Due to the small size of the higher education provision all programme development so far has been undertaken by the Dean. The most recent UoB programme proposed by the College adheres to the principles of programme design and development as specified in the College's procedures and guidance document. Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee demonstrate that the committee maintains appropriate institutional oversight of new programme developments.

2.6 The programme approval report states that the programme has been developed by the College in discussion with relevant industry experts. The College has recently adopted the University's employer consultation form for its programme development activities, which invites comments on new modules and programmes. To enable a wider group of academic staff to undertake programme and module design and development in the future the College has developed training materials to support this.

2.7 Although the awarding partners do not require the involvement of students in the programme design and development process, the College actively encourages students to comment on new developments. They are also able to provide input into the modification of

existing programmes and suggest changes through the Academic Standards Committee and the Student Steering Group.

2.8 The College meets the requirements of the awarding partners and adheres to the relevant internal and external governing programme design, development and approval. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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 to Higher Education

Findings

2.9 The College is responsible for recruitment, selection and admission of students as outlined in the collaborative agreements with the awarding partners. The College has an Admissions Policy which is supported by equal opportunities and student disability policies. The Admissions Policy which is reviewed annually and approved by the Academic Standards Committee does not allow for appeals against admissions decisions.

2.10 Prospective students receive information about the College's programmes through the website and have access to taster and open days. Admissions processes and procedures are described on the website and include information on entry requirements, fees and available bursaries. The College uses a three-stage application process, which comprises of an online application followed by the submission of a portfolio or related task and an interview with academic members of staff. Admissions decisions are made by the interviewers in discussion with the Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.11 To test the Expectation the review team scrutinised documents such as policies and procedures relating to admissions and information provided to prospective students. The team also met with academic and professional support staff and students.

2.12 The College effectively ensures that its recruitment, selection and admissions policies and procedures are both fair and transparent and are rigorously implemented. Standard interview templates used by the interview panels ensure consistency of approach and fairness in decision making. Students who met the review team reported that the admissions information on the website was generally useful, although there was some uncertainty whether UoB students should apply through UCAS or direct to the College (see recommendation under Information). Students valued the direct and helpful communication with the College at the point of application stating that the support they received helped them make an informed decision to study at the College. Several students had also taken advantage of events such as taster or open days and the opportunity to engage with student ambassadors which was useful.

2.13 The College ensures that policies and procedures relating to recruitment, selection and admissions are periodically reviewed. Entry requirements are discussed at bi-annual admissions meetings, with policies and retention data reviewed annually by the Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment, the Registrar and the Dean. Staff involved in the admissions process are provided with sufficient training which includes workshops provided by the Home Office and UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC).

2.14 Prior to enrolment, students sign an acknowledgement that they have read and are aware of College regulations, including a Student Code of Conduct and receive an informative welcome pack.

2.15 The College's recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable and inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met with 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

2.16 The College articulates its approach to learning and teaching through the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy. The strategy is made available to staff and students through the VLE. The Academic Recruitment Policy details the College's expectations for academic staff in terms of qualifications and experience. UoB approves teaching staff for its programmes. The Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Handbook sets out processes for the evaluation and enhancement of teaching practices such as peer observation of teaching, student feedback and staff development. There is a Peer Observation Policy and the College recently adopted a formal quarterly staff performance review and appraisal system. Overall responsibility for learning and teaching at institutional level rests with the Academic Standards Committee. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.17 The review team tested the Expectation by examining key documentation including strategies, policies and procedures related to learning and teaching, evaluation of teaching practices and staff development. The team also held meetings with senior and academic staff, and students.

2.18 The College has established effective learning and teaching practices that suit the needs of students. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed with the emphasis on practical skills appropriate to the fashion industry. Workshops are used extensively to develop industry-relevant skills as well as transferable skills such as collaboration and teamwork, verbal communication, research and problem solving. Lectures provide the theoretical underpinning, which is analysed in related student-led seminars. Field trips are viewed as integral to learning and there are frequent talks by industry speakers. Students are encouraged become independent learners. Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes include opportunities for work experience and end with significant independent study projects that must be self-managed. Overall, students are happy with the quality of teaching and the learning opportunities available to them and appreciate the College's approach of linking creative design to business practices.

2.19 Teaching staff are well qualified and have extensive industry experience with most staff also holding teaching qualifications. Effective internal processes have been established to provide cover for unavoidable staff absence, which is important to a small provider. Students who met the review team emphasised that the College was effective in organising contingencies when required and enable the smooth running of programmes.

2.20 The College reviews teaching practices through a developmental peer review process. Peer observations and co-teaching allows for the enhancement of pedagogic practice supported by internal training for teaching staff. Student feedback from Student Steering Group meetings and module evaluation forms is routinely used to review and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

2.21 Professional and career development is supported through a range of in-house and external staff development opportunities. For example, teaching staff benefit from training

provided by the Technology Manager in the use of new learning technologies. Staff are also encouraged to work as external examiners. While there are sufficient development opportunities for the growing academic staff team and the College is supportive of staff requests, it has not yet formally articulated an institutional approach to staff development. The review team, therefore, **recommends** that the College formulate a staff development policy that articulates the College's approach to supporting learning, teaching and assessment. Until recently the College had an annual appraisal process and has now introduced a mandatory quarterly staff performance review process. It is anticipated that this will help to identify individual and institutional staff development needs. The review team **affirms** the steps that the College is taking to formalise the staff appraisal process.

2.22 The College has effective learning and teaching practices and is successful in providing a distinctive learning community that combines practical with creative learning. Teaching quality is regularly reviewed and appropriate processes are in place for the development of staff. The review team concludes that the Expectation 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

2.23 Due to the small size of its higher education provision the College does not have a discreet student support department, instead a number of staff provide academic and pastoral support to students. The College's Special Educational Needs Policy describes its approach to supporting students with extra support needs. Academic staff provide academic advice for students and are also the first port of call for students with pastoral support needs. With the College's strong focus on employability two Careers Advisers provide a range of employment focused services. Programme handbooks signposted support arrangements and resources available.

2.24 Library and IT resources available reflect the College's focus with state-of-the-art studio space and editing facilities. Students participate in training sessions on the use of information systems and the development of digital and software skills is embedded into programmes. A range of library resources are accessible to all students including digital access to fashion sites and archives as well as the library/archive and supervised study spaces at Condé Nast International head office for MA students. The adequacy of learning and IT resources and systems is reviewed annually. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.25 To test the Expectation the review team considered relevant documentation, including programme handbooks, external examiner and other reports and held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff as well as students.

2.26 The College has effective arrangements for the provision of student support and appropriate resources that enable students to develop and achieve. Performance data show that student achievement is good, which is also reflected in the comments from external examiners.

2.27 Student feedback on the learning experience and support is positive. Upon arriving at the College, an engaging induction week provides students across all programmes with programme information, training on the usage of technology and the opportunity to engage with one another. Students value the close and targeted academic support with one-to-one tutorials and progress tutorials with Course Leaders. Students with special educational needs are identified pre-arrival and provided with additional academic support following a needs analysis. Teaching staff have also received dyslexia training to support them in programme delivery and the College is considering the introduction of further specialised and standardised support for students with special educational needs.

2.28 Students who met the review team reported that the College is attentive and approachable on welfare issues. The College closely monitors attendance as a means of identifying students that may have welfare issues. However, due to the small student numbers welfare provision is limited and students may need to be directed towards suitable external support.

2.29 Students praised the support they receive from the Careers Advisers who make a valuable contribution to their learning and professional development planning through individual tutorials, lectures, workshops and seminars as well as support for placements and postgraduation support such as CV surgeries. Students who met the review team gave

examples of how engagement with the careers team has helped them to gain a thorough understanding of what is required for employment in the industry and built their confidence.

2.30 The College has strong links with industry and students spoke highly of the value that industry speakers, guest lecturers and alumni bring to their studies and career planning. Industry placements and field trips enable students to experience fashion houses directly and provide unique insights into the industry which strengthens their personal and professional development and increases their employability. The review considers the strong industry links which enrich the students' learning experience and strengthen employability to be **good practice**.

2.31 The College is providing access to a wide range of fashion-related library resources, which are appreciated by students and generally meet their needs. Students are also encouraged to access resources from the local area although some students that the review team met were not aware of what was available to them. The College routinely evaluates the adequacy of the learning support systems. With the growth in higher education provision, particularly at postgraduate level, the College has recognised the need for greater academic resources, including access to a wider range of journals. At the time of the review the College was setting up an agreement with UoB, which will allow students access to a significantly greater pool of academic resources. The review team **affirms** the steps the College is taking to widen the choice of academic resources available to students.

2.32 The College has established a learning environment that supports students to prepare for a career in the fashion and fashion media industries and measures are in place to monitor the adequacy of student support arrangements and resources. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

2.33 The College's formal mechanisms for the engagement of students in the assurance and enhancement of the educational experience is through student representation and questionnaires. There is an established student representative system and two class representatives are members of a termly programme-based Student Steering Group, which evaluates the student experience and communicates to students the actions taken by the College in response to their feedback. Students are also represented on the Academic Standards Committee. A Student Representative Handbook explains the role and responsibilities of student representatives and the operation of the Student Steering Groups. Student representatives receive a certificate acknowledging the contribution they have made to the enhancement of the student experience.

2.34 The College also gathers feedback from students through surveys and questionnaires. Students complete module evaluation surveys after each module run the results of which feed into module evaluation reports. At the end of the programme students fill in a student experience survey. The College Committee monitors the student experience at institutional level. The arrangements in place would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.35 To test the Expectation the review team examined relevant committee minutes and evaluation reports and held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff, and students.

2.36 Students who met the review team confirmed that the student representation system is working well. Student representatives feel adequately briefed and supported in their role. Minutes of the Student Steering Committees and formal follow-up on issues raised show that student representatives play an active role in enhancing the student experience and that the College is responsive to student feedback and acts swiftly to resolve any issues. Feedback from Student Steering Group meetings is made available to students via the VLE. Academic Standards Committee minutes confirm that student representatives contribute to the deliberations of the committee.

2.37 Student surveys are routinely used to gather formal feedback from all students and the results are reviewed by the Registrar and the Dean. Samples of surveys seen by the review team evidence high levels of student satisfaction with their programmes. Module monitoring reports show careful consideration of student feedback and appropriate action planning. The student experience is adequately monitored by the College Committee. Staff and students reported that apart from the formal feedback channels students feel able to approach any member of academic and support staff informally with issues they may have and students appreciate the College's responsiveness.

2.38 The College has effective mechanisms in place for the engagement of students in the assurance and enhancement of their learning experience. The review team, therefore, concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Findings

2.39 The College has different assessment policies for UoB and GQ programmes. They describe the assessment methods and grade descriptors as well as arrangements for marking and moderation of assessment and the provision of feedback to students on assessed work. The assessment policies are supported by a Mitigating Circumstances Policy and an Academic Misconduct Policy. Assessment related policies are included in the relevant programme policy handbook and available on the VLE. The College's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy outlines in which circumstances students may apply for recognition of prior learning.

2.40 Setting of assessments is undertaken by the College's academic staff under the principles set out in respective awarding partner's academic regulations. The structure of assessments alongside the relevant learning outcomes is defined in the programme specifications. Programme-level learning outcomes are mapped to modules and programme specifications clearly articulate how these are covered at modular level. The assessment structure for modules is articulated within the module specifications. All assessment briefs are internally and externally verified. Students receive formative and summative feedback on their work within specified timescales. Programme handbooks contain summary information on assessment and signpost relevant policies.

2.41 Assessment decisions are verified at Examination Boards. For UoB provision the awarding body chairs the Board which is attended by College staff and the external examiners. For GQ programmes the College holds the examination board with the awarding organisation's external quality assurer attending. The arrangements in place would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.42 The review team tested the Expectation by scrutinising assessment and related policies, programme specifications and assessment briefs. The team also held meetings with a range of staff members and students.

2.43 Students who met the review team confirmed that assessment information in handbooks and project briefs is comprehensive and that they are clear about what is expected of them. Staff are well aware of the internal processes for the setting and approval of assessments. Assessments are entirely project based with variation between modules and a variety of modes such as presentations, group projects, written work, portfolios and creative outputs. Project briefs typically include details of the tasks, learning outcomes, submission dates and marking criteria and templates are used to ensure consistency. Briefs are approved by Course Leaders and standard forms, which provide sufficient opportunity for moderators and external examiners to comment are used for this purpose.

2.44 The College's processes of marking and moderation are derived from the awarding partners' requirements and the College applies them rigorously. The first marking is carried out by College staff who also carry out second marking after sampling of work. Grade variance is dealt with by the involvement of an independent third marker. Moderation processes are effective as there is an element of dual control, with assessments being

internally moderated and reviewed by the external examiners appointed by the awarding body. External examiner reports confirm the quality of assessments set and the robustness of the marking and internal moderation processes.

2.45 Students submit assessment via the VLE and feedback on assessed work is also provided through this platform. Project briefs clearly state the submission date and students confirmed that they generally receive summative feedback within the period specified in the Assessment Policy. Feedback is detailed and constructive and enables them to improve. External examiner reports comment positively on the quality and quantity of feedback provided.

2.46 Due to the project-based nature of assessment instances of academic misconduct are rare. The Academic Misconduct Policy clearly articulates the process for dealing with plagiarism and students who met the review team reported that the College takes steps to educate them in good academic practice.

2.47 Minutes of the examination boards demonstrate that they are working as intended with staff appropriately engaging with external examiners in the confirmation of assessment decisions. Applications for recognition of prior learning are considered by UoB.

2.48 Overall, the College's arrangements for assessment are reliable and fair and assessment policies and procedures are implemented consistently. Students are given appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The review team, therefore, concludes that the Expectation 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

2.49 The University of Buckingham appoints, trains and remunerates external examiners for each programme who operate under its regulations and procedures. The external examiner for each programme is identified for students in the programme handbook. Gateway Qualifications appoint an external quality assurer. In addition, the College appoints an external examiner to review practice and procedures in the assessment and quality assurance of the QC Diploma programme.

2.50 The College engages with UoB external examiners and the GQ external quality assurer for the approval of assessment briefs and at examination boards for the confirmation of assessment decisions. The annual reports produced by the external examiners are considered by programme teams and actioned accordingly, and the College provides a response to any issues raised. The Academic Standards Committee receives an overview of external examiner comments and resulting actions in the Dean's annual programme monitoring and evaluation report. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.51 The review team tested the Expectation and the effectiveness of the College's procedures by examining a range of documentation including external examiner reports and associated responses, annual monitoring reports, minutes of relevant meetings where reports are considered, and information on the student VLE. It also held meetings with students, teaching and senior staff.

2.52 The College has clear and effective mechanisms for the consideration of external examiner reports and responds to recommendations in the reports in line with the awarding body requirements. Where an external examiner raises a concern or area for improvement, programme teams include this in the action plan of the programme monitoring report, which feeds it into the Dean's annual report and the College's annual monitoring and evaluation report. External examiner reports are published on the VLE and students are aware of them.

2.53 Examination board minutes confirm detailed discussions with the external examiners on the delivery and management of UoB and GQ programmes.

2.54 Overall, the role of external examiners is clear and well embedded in the quality assurance system, and the College makes effective use of reports in the monitoring and review of higher education programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

2.55 All of the College's programmes are subject to the monitoring and review procedures set out by the awarding body. GQ does not require annual programme monitoring but the College has adopted the same process as for UoB provision. The Quality Assurance Handbook describes the programme monitoring procedures. The College produces module and annual programme monitoring reports and action plans to a template. Programme monitoring reports feed into an overall College annual monitoring and evaluation report covering all provision. Programme and College reports are considered by the Academic Standards Committee. UoB programmes are also subject to periodic review by the awarding body. The first review of this kind will take place in 2021. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.56 The team tested the Expectation by reviewing the procedures for programme monitoring and review along with programme and College annual monitoring reports. The team also held meetings with a range of staff and students.

2.57 Module monitoring reports examined by the review team are comprehensive and evaluative. They cover curriculum and assessment, resources, student performance, feedback from students, staff and external examiners as well as proposed changes. Student feedback from module surveys directly feeds into module monitoring reports. The results of the end of programme student experience surveys are summarised by the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Standards Committee and thus also contribute to programme monitoring. The outcomes of this monitoring exercise are appropriately reflected in the annual programme monitoring reports. Programme reports are very detailed, draw on a range of quantitative and qualitative data and contain measurable action plans.

2.58 The College's overarching monitoring report identifies good practice across programmes, brings together observations from external examiner reports and provides a detailed analysis of teaching, learning and assessment as well as student enrolment, progression and achievement. Actions from programme monitoring reports are appropriately reflected in the College action plan. An improved version of the monitoring template has been approved and will be used for the next College report. It will include a reflection on academic appeals and student complaints and enhancement of the provision. Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee show appropriate consideration of annual monitoring outcomes and processes by the committee.

2.59 Overall, the College operates appropriate processes for the monitoring and review of programmes. The review team, therefore, concludes that the Expectation 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

2.60 The College has devolved responsibility from the awarding partners for academic appeals and student complaints. The College has different academic appeals policies for UoB and GQ provision and a Student Complaints Policy covering all provision. Students have the opportunity to escalate academic appeals and complaints to the awarding partners and subsequently to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) once internal procedures have been exhausted. Academic appeals are heard by an appeals panel consisting of the Dean and a member of academic staff. Students are made aware of appeals and complaints procedures during the induction period and via their programme handbooks. They are also available on the College website and the VLE. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.61 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing policies and guidance documentation for students and staff on academic appeals and student complaints, including information on the website and the VLE. The team also held meetings with a range of staff and students.

2.62 The College's policies and procedures for academic appeals and complaints are fair and easily accessible for students. However, the review team found that the updated versions of the policies made available to the team differed from the versions available on the College website (see recommendation Information).

2.63 There is sufficient guidance for students on both processes in programme handbooks. Students met by the review team were generally clear about the process for academic appeals and complaints and where to access the policies and procedures. Since its inception in 2013 the College has not had any academic appeals or formal complaints.

2.64 The academic appeals policies clearly specify the circumstances and grounds for appeal. Appeals documentation including evidence are to be submitted to the Registrar and will be considered by an appeals panel in a formal hearing which the student appealing has the opportunity to attend. There are specified timescales for the consideration of appeals and the communication of outcomes.

2.65 The College follows a multi-stage approach for the resolution of student complaints and first seeks to resolve complaints informally. Staff and students confirmed that all student issues are being resolved in this way. The Complaints Policy allows for formal complaints to be submitted to the Registrar and gives clear timelines for the consideration of formal complaints. Formal complaints would be dealt with by an investigating officer or via a formal hearing. Unsatisfactory outcomes can be appealed.

2.66 The College has procedures in place for handling academic appeals and student complaints which are fair and accessible and enable appropriate management of academic appeals and complaints. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

2.67 The College's delivers learning opportunities with organisations other than its awarding body through compulsory and assessed industry placement modules at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Handbooks for students and placement providers support this activity. They outline the placement arrangements and responsibilities of the various parties. The College has undertaken a generic risk assessment for each placement module and keeps a log of the health and safety assessments undertaken by each placement provider. A placement information form captures the duration and location of the placement.

2.68 Placements can take place in office, studio, retail or special events environments. Students are required to complete 160 placement hours. This can be fulfilled with more than one employer. It is the student's responsibility to source the placement. All placements are approved by the placement module leader to ensure the nature and level of work undertaken by students provides a relevant learning experience. The College provides advice and guidance to students through the placement module leader and the Careers Advisers hold compulsory placement preparation workshops and career focused workshops. While on placement the placement module leader is available for support and holds tutorials where students are asked to reflect on the placement experience.

2.69 Placement modules are assessed by College staff and the assessment is specified in the module specification and the module project brief. Placement providers are not involved in the assessment of students but are invited to provide feedback on the performance and skills development of the placement student. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.70 The review team tested the Expectation by scrutinising the procedures guiding the approval, assessment and monitoring of placements as well as guidance documentation for students and placement providers. The team also held meetings with students and placement providers.

2.71 The review team spoke to one placement provider who stressed that from their perspective processes re working effectively. However, student feedback highlighted shortcomings in the management of placements in 2018, mainly relating to the timeliness of information and support provided to students resulting in a delay in the organisation of placements. In response the College reviewed the placement organisation processes and support materials. This resulted in the development of quality support materials for students and placement providers and a support and preparation programme delivered by the Careers Advisers has been put in place. An additional Careers Adviser was also appointed. Students who the review team met confirmed that placement preparations for the current academic year have started earlier and placements are being tailored to students' career ambitions.

2.72 Staff reported that the placement preparation programme is successfully being delivered. The new clear and comprehensive handbooks for students and placement providers provide transparency of the process, clearly stating placement requirements and

responsibilities of the all parties. Placement providers will have the opportunity to feed back to the College on the placement experience from their perspective. The College keeps appropriate records of approved placements including health and safety checks. The review team **affirms** the steps the College is taking to embed recently introduced processes and documentation with regards to student placements.

2.73 Overall, the College's arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with placement providers are managed securely and effectively. The review team concludes that the Expectation 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

2.74 The Expectation is not applicable as the College does not award research degrees.

Expectation: Not applicable

Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.75 In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. Out of the 11 Expectations in this judgement area 10 are applicable to the College. Expectation B11 is not applicable as the College does not award research degrees.

2.76 All Expectations are met and the associated level of risk is low in each case. There is one area of good practice located in Expectation B4 relating to the strong industry links of the College which enrich the students' learning experience and strengthen employability. This judgement area also has one recommendation in Expectation B3 which concerns the formulation of a staff development policy that articulates the College's approach towards strengthening learning, teaching and assessment. Expectations B3, B4 and B10 contain affirmations relating to the steps the College is taking to formalise the staff appraisal process (Expectation B3), to widen the choice of academic resources available to students (Expectation B4) and to embed the recently introduced processes and documentation with regard to student placements (Expectation B10).

2.77 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the provider **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 has responsibility for ensuring that the information it publishes is fit for purpose and accurate. It has a formal process for the approval and sign off of published information. Responsibility for the approval of information currently lies with the Registrar for internal information (for example policies and handbooks) and the Head of Marketing for external information, and overall with the Dean. A new process is currently under development. The College keeps a log indicating when information was checked and updated.

3.2 Information is provided to students, staff and other interested parties in a range of formats. Promotional materials designed for prospective students are mainly presented through the College website, though leaflets and brochures are also generated. The VLE provides all course related information for current students. This is supplemented by programme and other student handbooks. UoB provides a compliance checklist designed to ensure that public information for its programmes is appropriate and Competition and Market Authority (CMA) compliant. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3 To test the Expectation the review team scrutinised a range of published information in print and digital formats and held meetings with students and staff responsible for the production and approval of information.

3.4 The VLE is viewed as the primary source of information for enrolled students and is widely used by staff and students. The Technology Manager is responsible for maintaining the VLE and carries out an annual review of technological resources that includes the usage of the VLE.

3.5 Information students receive on their programme of study through the VLE is accurate and comprehensive. For example, prior to commencing their studies at the College accepted students are provided with access to the VLE and receive sufficient information about their induction week. Students also have access to detailed programme, module and academic policy information, with course handbooks providing general information on the student engagement process, academic misconduct and appeals and complaints. Student representatives have access to a useful student representative handbook outlining the importance and methods of student engagement. Comprehensive assessment information such as assessment expectations, deadlines and grading criteria are also made available on the VLE. The VLE additionally provides staff and students with a communication platform. Students who met the review team praised the quality of information and the resources it contains.

3.6 The wide-ranging content on the website is currently under review and includes the College's mission, application and programme information for all programmes including entry requirements and course fees, information on staff and the student experience and links to academic policies, regulations and external examiner reports. Students also have access to

the Complaints and Appeals Policy. The emphasis on industry-led programmes and employability is transparent in the detailed information provided on the website, ensuring that prospective students can make sufficiently informed decisions on whether to study at the College. The College has established generally effective processes for ensuring that published information is accurate and accessible. UoB's compliance checklist provides helpful guidance to staff for ensuring CMA compliance.

3.7 The College provides an annual review of information and adjustments to the College website are logged. However, the review team identified recently updated policies which required adjustment on the website, and the College proposed an increase in the regularity of internal checks to ensure that adjustments to policies and procedures are promptly updated. Furthermore, not all information on the website is fit for purpose. Some students who met the review team reported that the application information for degree programmes was confusing and would benefit from greater clarity. They had been uncertain on whether they should apply through UCAS or directly to the College, and the stages of application were presented inconsistently across programmes. The College acknowledged the issue and explained that the Head of Marketing and Recruitment is undertaking a review of information on the website and any ambiguities and inconsistencies would be eliminated in the process. The review team **affirms** the steps that the College is taking to ensure that information is fit for purpose.

3.8 Internal processes for the generation and approval of published information provide confidence that information is generally fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.10 The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low. There are no recommendations or good practice in this judgement area. There is an affirmation of the steps the College is taking to ensure that information is fit for purpose.

3.11 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the provider **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's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 identifies the enhancement of the student learning experience as one of the key objectives. The Learning Teaching and Enhancement Strategy which is linked to the plan sets out the College's aims for and approach to enhancement. The quality assurance processes, in particular module and programme monitoring and evaluation, student feedback mechanisms such as the Student Steering Group meetings and surveys, and the external examining system generate a range of information that is considered by the Academic Standards Committee and the College Committee. The College also uses staff feedback to inform enhancement activities. Good practice and enhancement initiatives are captured in an enhancement log. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.2 The review team tested the Expectation by examining a range of documentation, including policies and strategies, relevant committee meeting minutes and monitoring reports. The team also held meetings with a range of staff and students.

4.3 The College effectively uses its module and programme monitoring processes and student feedback mechanisms to identify good practice and enhancement opportunities. Reporting templates are designed to include data analysis and the identification of good practice, areas for improvement and action plans. Within the new format for annual monitoring reporting the Dean's annual report will consider the effectiveness of the enhancement processes in place.

4.4 The enhancement log is a useful tool for the monitoring of enhancement activities. It brings together good practice, issues and enhancement opportunities identified from a range of sources for example staff and student feedback, module evaluations and external examiner comments and identifies actions to be taken together with responsibilities and timescales for completion. Enhancement opportunities are also identified by committees, with the termly Academic Planning Meetings providing an opportunity for academic staff to share best practice and identify areas for improvement.

4.5 The College has developed enhancement initiatives that support learning including the development of its VLE which is used extensively for programme related learning and teaching activities. The College is monitoring its developing functionality on an ongoing basis to seek new and improved methods of utilising the platform. In order to enhance its capability for the collection and in-depth interrogation of data the College is investigating suitable higher education management software solutions. The College listens to and communicates effectively with students via the VLE and responds swiftly to student feedback.

4.6 The College's industry-focused and practice-based learning is reviewed regularly to ensure approaches remain fit for purpose and are in line with developments in technology and educational practice. Industry set projects and input into course development ensure that programmes remain up to date and relevant and that content is enhanced on a continuous basis. The College is proactive in identifying new external learning opportunities that students can participate in, such as exhibitions and industry events. Its strong links with industry also support students' placement learning opportunities and industry speakers help to develop and enhance their employability skills. Students spoke positively about the

opportunities in gaining access to industry specialists to support their academic work and career ambitions.

4.7 Overall, the College takes deliberate steps at institutional level to enhance students' learning opportunities. The identification of enhancement opportunities and the implementation of enhancement initiatives including progress monitoring and assessment of impact is supported by robust institutional structures and processes. The review team, therefore, concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.9 The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low. There are no recommendations, affirmations or good practice in this judgement area.

4.10 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

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 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#).

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

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.

Awarding organisation

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

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* (FQHEIS).

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.

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.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

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.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk