



Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers)

Rushmore Business School (UK) Ltd

Review Report
February 2024

Contents

About this review	1
Key findings	2
Judgements	2
Good practice.....	2
Recommendations	2
Affirmation of action being taken.....	2
About the provider	3
Explanation of findings	4
1 Commentary: The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners.....	4
2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities.....	8
Glossary	29

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Rushmore Business School (UK). The online review took place from 21 to 22 February 2024 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr John Byrom (Reviewer)
- Colin Stanfield (Reviewer)
- Dr Harry Williams (Student Reviewer)

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 (and the associated Core and Common practices) 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 (Foreign Providers), the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on academic standards
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure. The outcome of the FSMG check for Rushmore Business School is no material issues were identified.

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

¹ 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 (Foreign Providers) handbook: 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 quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK Expectations.

The QAA review team also provided a commentary on academic standards.

- The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners.

Good practice

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

- The plans to enable students and staff to study and work at both the Mauritius and UK campuses to enhance the student experience through international mobility and promote positive academic and professional outcomes (Core practice Q9).

Recommendations

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

By July 2024:

- make all policies and procedures, in particular the Admissions Policy, publicly available for all stakeholders (Core practice Q1).

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 being taken to identify and make available a suitable online learning resource package and have it in place by Summer 2024 (Core practice Q4)
- the work underway as outlined in the School Student Engagement Strategy and Policy document to actively engage students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience (Core practice Q5)
- the steps being taken to review, revise and develop the School complaints process so that it is ready by Summer 2024 (Core practice Q6).

About the provider

Rushmore Business School (RBS/the School) is a private tertiary education institution founded in 2002 which provides academic and professional courses to school leavers, graduates, and the business community in Mauritius. One of the School's key strategic aims is to open a campus in the UK where it will primarily partner, but not solely, with the University of Suffolk in delivering higher education courses. To further this ambition the School has secured a teaching delivery site in central Bracknell as its UK campus.

The School sets out a mission to deliver world-class education that prepares students for successful careers in the dynamic global business environment in the UK with a vision to become a leading higher education institution known for academic excellence, innovative teaching methods, and strong industry connections.

RBS intends to provide opportunities for students based in Mauritius to come to the UK to enhance their learning experience with access to a wider range of educational opportunities and cultural experiences. In addition to this, the School also wants to recruit other international students and UK-based students who will pursue the traditional three-year model of study in the UK.

In the 2024-25 academic year, RBS proposes to enrol approximately 130 students at its Bracknell campus, supported by 14 academic staff and four administrative staff working with five awarding bodies delivering 17 courses, ranging from Level four to Level seven. Most students will be enrolled on University of Suffolk and Pearson franchise courses with the remainder on courses offered through the Confederation of Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology (CIBTAC), Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH) and The Chartered Institute of IT (BCS). The main subject areas covered are Business, Hospitality, Computing and IT, and Nursing, with a mix of certificate, diplomas, higher nationals, honours degrees, top-ups and taught master's.

RBS has not previously been subject to a review by a UK-based Quality Assurance Agency, but it has been subject to partner approval processes and programme validation by its awarding bodies (including University of Suffolk and Leeds Beckett University). The review by QAA was undertaken based on the plans set out by the School to offer higher education provision in the UK from September 2024. These plans are based on delivering programmes which are already offered in Mauritius, and the School will either replicate the quality assurance arrangements in Mauritius or enhance them to meet the expectation of UK higher education.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1 Commentary: The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners

Findings

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

1.1 Rushmore Business School's (RBS/the School) primary validating partner for higher education programmes to be delivered at its planned UK campus will be the University of Suffolk (UoS). The School has an existing Institutional Validation agreement with the University and course validation reapproval. The respective responsibilities of the School and University have been agreed and are set out in the University of Suffolk QAA Partnership Responsibilities checklist. The School delivers programmes under a franchised agreement with the University which has overarching responsibility for setting academic standards.

1.2 The review team heard that the School has engaged proactively with the University to establish a strong working relationship based on a clear and shared understanding of the responsibilities of each partner. The responsibilities are clearly set out in a range of formal documents and confirmed for the team in a Partnership Responsibilities checklist. The team met representatives from the University and senior staff from the School who described in detail the active measures that the University takes, in partnership with the School, to secure and maintain academic standards of franchised programmes. This includes the deployment of link tutors, who are academic subject specialists, to work with delivery staff at the School to ensure high quality delivery (see Q2 below). There is also oversight of the arrangements by a partnership manager and an assistant partnership manager and through the University Partnership Management Group that meets quarterly.

1.3 The School has updated and extended its Collaborative Agreement with the University to cover the period 2022-27. The review team considered the agreement to be comprehensive, detailed, and likely to form a sound basis on which the School can fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards. The agreement clarifies how academic standards will be managed by the respective parties; for example, the governance and structures for management of the partnership, including validation and revalidation, staffing and assessment. In meetings with academic staff, senior staff and representatives of the University, the team found that all parties had a thorough understanding of their roles in terms of setting and maintaining standards. For example, academic staff had full appreciation of their responsibility to deliver programmes using programme specifications, and these staff, along with senior managers, valued the active input of University link tutors to ensure that School staff were fully conversant with these specifications and how delivery could be contextualised to the specific circumstances of the School and its students to meet local needs. The Collaborative Agreement with the University also provides detail on how the deliberative committees of both parties will be established and how they will operate, including membership, schedules and reporting lines.

1.4 In addition to its partnership with University of Suffolk, the School has agreements in place with the Confederation of International Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology (CIBTAC), Pearson/BTEC, Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH) and with the Chartered

Institute for IT (BCS) for proposed UK awards. The School also has a partnership with Leeds Beckett University for provision in Mauritius. The responsibilities checklists for these awarding bodies clearly set out the respective responsibilities of the School and awarding body. The review team explored in detail how the School intends to manage these responsibilities given that they vary from awarding body to awarding body. The team found that senior and academic staff had a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and were able to fully explain the approaches that will be adopted for their UK provision to help them to meet these responsibilities. These included the initial centre and course approval mechanisms, the deployment of a course coordinator to work with the respective awarding body, adherence to programme and unit specifications and through a three-stage assessment strategy, involving first and second marking followed by internal verification before assessments are submitted to the awarding body.

1.5 The review team considered that the arrangements in place with the other awarding bodies will form a sound basis on which the School can meet its responsibilities for academic standards at the planned UK campus.

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

1.6 In meetings with senior and academic staff, the review team explored the School's understanding and use of external reference points regarding the management of academic standards. While the team found no explicit reference to external reference points such as UK benchmarks or the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), the team heard that by securing awarding body approval to deliver programmes for a UK awarding body this provided confirmation that the School's existing approach is in alignment with UK benchmarks and standards.

1.7 The review team considered external examiner reports for existing programmes and found that these were positive. For example, the Pearson IQR BTEC L7 Leadership and Management report June 2023 cited effective internal verification and high-quality assignment briefs as good practice. In addition, the Leeds Beckett external examiner report October 2022 confirmed, for partnership activity, the effectiveness of arrangements in place for provision in Mauritius to ensure that the standards of awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where or how programmes are delivered, and who delivers them. In addition, the awarding bodies provide externality through ongoing moderation of assessment, monitoring, accreditation, reaccreditation and approval, and reapproval of programmes. The awarding bodies are responsible for appointing and deploying external examiners, and external examiner reports confirm that these bodies undertake external and ongoing review of programmes.

1.8 In meetings with staff the team heard how the School places an emphasis on employer engagement for both staff and students as a key element to ensure that 'externality' is brought to bear on maintaining standards and delivering high-quality programmes. Examples of the current approach to this were given as employer contribution to teaching and learning through guest speakers and industry visits, and contributions to assessments through live briefs.

1.9 The School's Terms of Reference for its Industry Advisory Board describe how the School currently uses external industry and government agency expert advice to support academic standards through, for example, informing programme design and delivery. The review team heard from staff how the School plans to replicate this approach for its UK provision, such that the Industry Advisory Board provides a channel of communication between the School and relevant sections of industry and government and ensures that the School can receive appropriate expert advice.

1.10 The review team considered that the approaches described above, if implemented with the same rigour, will allow the School to effectively use external reference points in its management of academic standards for the programmes at its planned UK campus.

How effectively does the provider use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?

1.11 For its planned UK provision, the responsibilities document shows that assessment is a shared responsibility between the School and University. The School is responsible for the preparation of assessments, marking and moderation before sending the assessed work to the University of Suffolk for external examiner verification. The University is responsible for the appointment of external examiners and for the examination and progression boards, after which results are sent to the School for release. External examiners scrutinise course content and assessments to ensure they align with the standards of the awarding body.

1.12 The School's responsibility for the preparation of assessments is guided by the awarding body which sets the formats, guidelines, and rubrics for assessments. The School describes how the marking of assessed work for courses franchised from the University of Suffolk involves calibration exercises held between teaching staff at the School and faculty from the University to ensure standardisation. First marking, conducted by School teaching staff, is then subject to a moderation process by faculty from the University which aims to ensure unbiased marking and alignment with the academic standards of the University.

1.13 The assessment and examination boards consists of members from both the partner University and the School and this board oversees the assessment process. The board has responsibility for reviewing assessment results, approving final grades and addressing any student appeals. The board ensures that the assessment standards are applied consistently and fairly across both institutions. This was confirmed in meetings with senior staff and University representatives where there was a clear understanding of the role of the assessment boards as the final arbiter of assessment decisions.

1.14 Approaches to assessment on programmes approved by the other awarding bodies varies considerably. For example, the team heard how for BCS and CTH programmes the awarding body sets the assessments. However, senior and academic staff had a clear understanding of how the School would undertake first and second marking and internal verification of assessments, prior to them being submitted to the awarding body. The team considered that this was a sound approach to ensuring academic standards internally allied to those set by the external examiners.

1.15 The review team considered that the approaches described above will allow the School to effectively use external scrutiny of assessment processes in its management of academic standards for the programmes at its planned UK campus.

The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners: Summary of findings

1.16 In reaching its conclusion the review team considers that the existing programmes currently meet the standards of design and delivery required by the different awarding bodies that the School works with. The School intends to apply these existing structures to its planned UK provision. Because of this the team considered that this will allow the School to effectively fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards.

1.17 In addition, given that the School intends to replicate its existing approaches for its UK provision, the review team considered that approaches being used provide sufficient confidence that the School will be able to effectively use external reference points in its management of academic standards for the programmes at its planned UK campus.

1.18 Finally, as the School intends to apply the assessment policy and procedures outlined above to its planned UK provision, the review team considered that these approaches will allow the School to effectively use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure the academic standards for the programmes at its planned UK campus.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Core practice (Q1): The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

Findings

2.1 The School outlines its approach towards the recruitment and selection of students in its student admission policy and includes the general entrance requirements, language requirements, and arrangements for registration, deferral and withdrawal from studies. Students apply, initially, by an application form, in which they can submit applications for up to three programmes of study in order of preference. Applications are considered based on academic merit. All applications are reviewed by an Admission Panel, which takes into consideration the specific entry requirements of the programme of study. It is the validating body/awarding partner who has the final approval on all applications to study. There are arrangements for the induction of new students, which includes orientation sessions, tours of the facilities, and presentations from key staff members.

2.2 During the review, the team noted that most applications to study at the School are successful: across all intakes in 2023, the School received 363 applications and enrolled 358 students meaning that only five applications were unsuccessful. Of these, 295 students enrolled formally, meaning an aggregate conversion rate of 82.4%. The team heard that the School keeps up a high conversion rate partly because of its applications process in which candidates can identify up to three programmes onto which they can enrol. Where the applicant does not meet the entry requirements for their top choice, they can alternatively enrol on the second/third if they meet the entry requirements. Further, the School noted that it has a suite of Level 3 programmes on which unsuccessful candidates can be directed should they not meet the requirements for Level 4 study, thus providing opportunities for applications that would otherwise be rejected. However, in practice 94% of applicants secured their first choice.

2.3 There are arrangements in place dealing with the recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) and these are outlined in the School's RPEL policy. To apply, applicants/students must submit an expression of interest to either the Admissions Team (if they are at the point of application) or their course coordinator (if they are already enrolled). Where the School is not the awarding body, the RPEL application will be submitted to the Admissions Team/course coordinator and then be forwarded to the relevant UK based awarding body for a decision. The relevant link tutor makes the decision, but it can involve other parties at the awarding partner where a case is complex. The Admissions Team will write to the student communicating the outcome. This process, the review team concluded, would allow the effective recognition of any prior learning.

2.4 Information on programme length, entry requirements, tuition fees, course content and awarding institution is provided on the School's website. However, while the RPEL policy is publicly available through the School's website, the latest version (or any version) of the student admission policy is not clearly available and accessible. Considering its importance to potential students, the team **recommends** that the School make all policies and procedures, and particularly the admissions policy, publicly available for all stakeholders.

2.5 Students in their submission to the review team confirmed their experiences of application, admission, and induction were positive. The team also met with students and student representatives during the review who confirmed that their experiences of the admissions system were positive.

2.6 The School has in place an admissions complaints process. The team confirmed that there are no grounds for appeal against the academic decision of whether to offer someone a place but there are grounds for a decision to be reconsidered where procedural irregularity can be evidenced. Applicants wishing to raise a complaint can do so in writing or verbally to the School's Admissions Office. The Head of Student Support Services will respond to the complaint within 10 working days. If the applicant remains unsatisfied, they can complain directly to the Academic Director. The decision of the Academic Director is final except for applicants applying for a programme validated/franchised by a UK awarding body where the student can also appeal to the relevant awarding partner as the final arbiter.

2.7 The review team confirms that the School's admissions system is inclusive, fair, and reliable, and that there are effective procedures in place for assessing applications and making decisions, collaborating with awarding partners where necessary. There are processes in place to assess applications for RPEL, and to decide admissions-related student complaints and appeals. The School's website contains clear and accessible information relating to entry requirements, selection criteria, and course content, enabling applicants to make informed decisions. The team concluded therefore that the Core practice was met with an associated low risk.

Core practice: Met

Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q2): The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

Findings

2.8 Programme self-evaluation reports are a key element of the School's approach to the management of the programmes that it delivers for a range of awarding bodies (see section on academic standards). The reports show how programme leaders review the quality of academic programmes. The self-evaluation reports include data on retention and pass rates, reasons for student withdrawal and the status of students who may be re-sitting the course. The reports also provide commentary, respond to external examiner reports, and include a reflective commentary by the programme leader about how the programme can be enhanced. For example, the report for the BSc Hons in Quantity Surveying Commercial Management suggests extending engagement with local businesses to help students to put theory into practice and to enhance their employability skills and sector awareness.

2.9 For programmes franchised from Leeds Beckett University and delivered in Mauritius, programme leaders are required to submit an annual monitoring report. These reports are sent for consideration by the School's Academic Director and Academic Board, where areas for development and good practice are identified. In addition, the reports are also scrutinised by the relevant awarding body and together this illustrates a sound approach by which the School ensures its delivery of high-quality courses.

2.10 The School main validating partner for higher education programmes to be delivered at its planned UK campus will be the University of Suffolk. The School has an existing Institutional Validation agreement with the University and course validation reapproval. The respective responsibilities of the School and University have been agreed. The School delivers programmes under a franchised agreement with the University and therefore the University has overarching responsibility for course design and development.

2.11 The Institutional Validation Agreement and Responsibilities also describe how the University will approve the teaching team at the UK campus on an annual basis (see also Q3 below). In addition, teaching staff will receive ongoing staff development support from the University to assure alignment of teaching methodologies with the standards expected. This approach was confirmed in meetings with senior, academic and University representatives where the review team heard how the University takes a supportive and proactive approach collaborating with the School to ensure the delivery of high-quality programmes.

2.12 The School has started planning to introduce a new committee structure that will establish new reporting mechanisms in line with the expectations of the University of Suffolk. As part of its approach to ensuring effective ongoing course design and content, the School intends to establish a Course Enhancement Committee with the remit to promote the quality of all learning and teaching provision and to maintain appropriate standards for courses, for assessment methods and for teaching quality.

2.13 The School places emphasis on how its course design and development incorporate engagement with industry to inform course content and delivery and the opportunity for student industry placements. In meetings with staff and students the review team heard about employer engagement with reference to live assessment briefs, guest speakers, internships and advice and guidance about course design, content and delivery. Students were positive about the value of employer engagement that they experienced as part of their educational experience.

2.14 The review team heard in meetings and found in the evidence submitted that the School plans to replicate, for its intended UK provision, the current approaches to the

delivery of high-quality courses for the range of awarding bodies that it works with. Because of this the team formed the view that existing approaches are effective and provide a sound basis for the delivery of high-quality programmes at its intended UK campus and therefore the Core practice is met with a low risk.

Core practice: Met

Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q3): The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

Findings

2.15 The RBS Strategic Plan for the five-year period from 2022-27 contains eight priorities, one of which foregrounds the significant role of staffing. Under the 'Human Capital' priority, the importance of talent attraction, performance management, retention and reward, and personal development plans is highlighted. Although specific metrics to measure success of the plan are not included, the Strategic Plan indicates the pivotal role that staff play in delivering on organisational priorities, including those relating to the student experience.

2.16 In terms of recruitment, the Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy offers evidence that the School recognises the importance of open competition and the appointment of staff based on merit. In the University of Suffolk's Report of the Institutional Validation (2022) it is apparent that the skills required for teaching are assessed; for example, the requirement for applicants to give a presentation as part of the recruitment process so that they can demonstrate effective communication skills and are competent to teach.

2.17 The School's approach to staff induction involves a series of onboarding sessions delivered by internal and external personnel. This is complemented by ongoing staff development activities which are open to both new recruits as well as to established staff members. Staff development sessions include training delivered by the staff of partner organisations including Leeds Beckett University and the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH). Topics covered include academic integrity and assessment and form part of ongoing staff development activity (considered further below).

2.18 The Staff Induction Plan highlights the full range of information for a new starter, differentiated by role (that is, administrative and academic). As well as aspects such as health and safety and the provision of IT equipment, the training and development needs of academic staff are discussed with the academic partners to ensure that they meet the needs of the awarding bodies. The review team considered that the approach to induction with the plan and a checklist ensures that staff are appropriately inducted into their new roles, and that the key features of the organisation's operating model (for example working in partnership) are considered.

2.19 The nature of the existing staffing base in Mauritius is provided in an overview spreadsheet. As well as a management and administrative function of 10 individuals, this document details lecturer responsibilities broken down by programme (with staff teaching across different programmes and partners). The review team found most academic staff are educated to master's level as evidenced in the staff CVs, although some have recently graduated from undergraduate programmes. The staff CVs demonstrate that there is one doctoral-qualified staff member, and one Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). To increase the number of staff with doctoral qualification, the RBS Strategic Plan (2022-27) highlights a wish to sponsor and support staff 'to pursue doctoral studies'. Similarly, there is an aspiration for more staff to achieve fellowship of the HEA. The review team's meeting with academic staff described how staff are supported on continuous professional development, as well as in further developing their capabilities in research through, for example, support for conference attendance.

2.20 In the University of Suffolk 'Report of the Institutional Validation of Rushmore Business School' (June 2022) it includes the approval of staff CVs by the University as an important external quality control mechanism. Support for staff development from the University of Suffolk was also apparent in the School's Resourcing and Action Plan. The Resourcing and

Action Plan provides criteria in relation to the management and development of staff including the need for industry experience among staff, and the 'continuous' nature of staff development. Staff development issues were explored at the visit in the meeting with staff of the awarding body, and the review team was told the University had offered a range of staff development activity for both academic and administrative staff.

2.21 The review team found that peer observation of teaching and learning takes place on a regular basis. Indeed, the policy which informs peer observation includes aspects of best practice (such as the need for a pre-meeting and feedback session around the observed session). This reassured the review team that the School recognises the importance of peer review as an important mechanism through which improvements may be effected.

2.22 The School has set out its plans in relation to the staffing of the UK operation which will follow the policies and systems in place in Mauritius for areas such as recruitment and onboarding. In its Staffing and Recruitment Strategy it indicates that 40% of the staffing base will consist of staff transferring from the Mauritian operation, with the remaining 60% recruited from within the UK. By looking to 'maintain a staff:student ratio of 1:15', the review team considered the associated staffing level of 10-15 is feasible. The staffing and recruitment strategy also sets out minimum student enrolments by programme and the associated staffing of 14 academic (10 at undergraduate level and four at postgraduate) and five administrative staff members.

2.23 The review team formed the view that the plans for staffing were appropriate and would be a suitable way of ensuring that existing organisational knowledge and elements of good practice are kept and shared across the UK and Mauritius operations and that this was likely to allow the delivery of a high-quality academic experience. The team concluded that there was a low risk regarding this Core practice being met.

Core practice: Met

Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q4): The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

Findings

2.24 The proposed Rushmore Business School UK campus is situated in the Berkshire town of Bracknell. The SED outlines the rationale behind the choice of location, including the fact that there is currently no higher education provision in the town, and that it offers easy accessibility to London. Local facilities in Bracknell, including bus and train stations, are close by. The multi-storey building within which space is to be taken is such that more space can be leased from the building's owner as required.

2.25 At the Bracknell campus there is to be a variety of teaching spaces suitable for between four and 25 students. Evidence from the student submission indicates that in respect of the Mauritian operation, upgrading of facilities has taken place over time, indicating a willingness on the part of the School to invest in the spaces used for teaching and learning. During the visit, the review team met with staff from the University of Suffolk and were reassured by the due diligence procedures that had been conducted. These had included a full in-person visit to the UK operation and sign-off at senior levels of the University. Once the Bracknell campus is up and running QAA will undertake a visit to see the physical resources as part of the routine annual monitoring process.

2.26 In terms of learning resources, the existing partnerships with UK universities allow students to access suitable material to support their learning using online library resources. The University of Suffolk validation exercise reiterated that students have access to the awarding body's e-library. Although not explicitly mentioned, the review team was told that students who enrolled in a programme offered by a University would also be able to access any database resources subscribed to by their respective awarding bodies. Access to learning resources would be further facilitated through the issue of a tablet to every registered student.

2.27 The School is in the process of reviewing how it enables students to access e-journals and the review team was keen to understand further the School's plans in respect of learning resources for UK-based students, especially for those on a diploma programme and were therefore not registered with a University. In meetings with senior staff at the School, the review team was reassured that, although the School was currently reviewing its subscription to its existing e-journal host, there would be a replacement in place by the time operations start in the UK. Therefore, the review team **affirms** the steps being taken to identify and make available a suitable online learning resource package and have it in place by Summer 2024 (Q4).

2.28 The School uses Moodle as its virtual learning environment (VLE) and this will continue in respect of the planned UK operation. The student submission refers positively to the VLE as a means of accessing learning resources. During the visit, the review team had access to all areas of the VLE and was able to confirm that the VLE was effective and enabled students to access a range of teaching and learning material through it, including lecture notes and slides.

2.29 The support available to students is evident in a range of course handbooks. The handbooks signpost students to a range of support services that are available, including counselling, careers and employability, disability support, library access, counselling, and IT support. Underpinning this is a student support policy. The policy, while brief, indicates the services which students can access and the summary of services indicates that there are a range of functions offered by the School. The SED summarises the current approach to

pastoral care which is responsive and includes a mix of face-to-face contact and online support.

2.30 Academic staff also function as personal tutors to students, with the nature of the role outlined in the Personal Tutor Policy. The review team saw an example of a personal tutor report form that indicated the range of issues discussed between tutor and student and it covered areas that would be expected in such a report. The training that is provided for staff taking on the personal tutor role is conducted annually and is led by a counsellor.

2.31 The School's plans for student support at the Bracknell campus involves the appointment of up to eight support staff members. While most will be appointed from the UK, existing expertise will come through the transfer of one to two staff from Mauritius. The existing range of support services is expected to be offered, with a 'lean' approach at first which draws on existing capacity in Mauritius and then scales up as student numbers grow. The review team considered that the School's approach to student support is a reasonable starting point as provision develops.

2.32 In summary, the review team considers that the current approach to the provision of facilities, learning resources and student support services is such that a high-quality academic experience is likely to be provided and that there was a low risk regarding this Core practice being met.

Core practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q5): The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

Findings

2.33 The School has developed a Student Engagement Strategy and accompanying Policy. The strategy and policy outlines the School's commitment to ensuring students and student representatives have opportunities to provide feedback on, and to influence the quality of, their learning experience. Student feedback feeds into the School's Course Enhancement Committee, which meets every semester. The review team considered a sample of minutes from the Course Enhancement Committee (CEC) and confirmed that student feedback is fully discussed and an action plan developed to address any concerns. Once action points are completed, this is communicated to students through the School's VLE and email thereby closing the feedback loop. Separately, minutes of the CEC are made available to students and student representatives on the VLE. During the review, the team met with students and student representatives who confirmed that the School communicates programme changes regularly, including when changes were made, for example, to the operation of a service because of student feedback.

2.34 There is an established student representative system which is based around the School's course structure. Representatives are elected by their peers and are provided with an induction covering their responsibilities, key staff contacts, the School's management structures, and their role as a representative. The review team met with student representatives during the review and confirmed they were engaged in quality processes at the School, and that ongoing support was provided to enable them to meet their responsibilities.

2.35 There are opportunities for students to contribute towards the enhancement of their educational experience using the Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC). The SSLC ensures that the views of students are given appropriate attention in course and module review processes. SSLC holds termly meetings between student representatives, academic staff (such as Programme Leaders), and managers to discuss issues raised by students with actions agreed and followed up. The team reviewed a sample of course-specific and SSLC action plans and concluded that they do allow students and student representatives to contribute towards course development.

2.36 There are regular points where students' views are collected, including Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET), and Student Evaluation of Module (SEM). Students complete SETs annually, and SEMs either in the middle and towards the end of a module, or at the end of the academic year. The SETs are designed to ensure the School keeps up effective, up-to-date teaching practice, whereas SEMs are designed primarily to collect feedback for curriculum development processes. While comprehensive, the team also noted many of the provider's student surveys exhibited low/poor response rates. Having identified this, the School held meetings with students and student representatives to determine the underlying causes and improve student engagement going forward. The team reviewed a sample of module evaluations, including those from the Diploma in IT and Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) in Aircraft Engineering and confirmed that these surveys took place and that the data was used internally. Students and student representatives in their submission to the review team confirmed that they were satisfied with the arrangements for student engagement and were comfortable that their feedback was listened to and acted upon.

2.37 In preparation for its UK campus the School has reviewed its current approach to student engagement and has developed plans to enhance its current practice. A key part of this is the embedding of students and student representatives in the School's deliberative

committee structure. The review team noted that currently, although student feedback does feed into Academic Board through course leaders and Quality Reports, there are no student representatives sitting as formal members on Academic Board. This was also highlighted in a separate review by one of the School's new awarding partners - the University of Suffolk. Senior staff at the School explained that because of its size and the Mauritian higher education culture, student representatives have not featured systematically in the academic governance structure. However, going forward, the School expects that all key quality committees and boards will include student representation including Academic Board. The team concluded that although there was a gap in the School's approach to student engagement, steps were being taken to address these problems. Therefore, the team **affirms** the work underway as outlined in the Student Engagement Strategy and Policy document to actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

2.38 In conclusion, the review team considered that the School has effective mechanisms for engaging students and student representatives in the quality of their educational experience and these provide opportunities for all students to be involved. Although student representatives are not currently systematically involved in the academic governance structure, the team understood the historic reasons for this and, more importantly, noted that the School has clear and credible plans to ensure the use of student representatives on academic committees in the future. For these reasons, the team concluded that the arrangements in place currently to engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience allow the Core practice to be met with an associated low risk.

Core practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q6): The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

Findings

2.39 The School delivers a range of programmes, for some of which it is the awarding body, and others it delivers on behalf of another awarding partner, for example, Leeds Beckett University or the University of Suffolk. There are processes in place for the handling of complaints and appeals. All students are required to exhaust the School's internal complaints and appeals processes before seeking external review. For students enrolled on programmes where the School is not the final awarding body, they may separately approach their awarding body after having exhausted the School's internal processes. Policy documents describing these processes are available to staff and students via the provider's VLE. Separately, complaints and appeal documents are available to all stakeholders via the provider's website.

2.40 Students may submit complaints, either by phone, email, or in person to the Head of Student Support Services. The Head of Student Support Services will attempt to clarify the issue and resolve informally, where possible. If this fails and the complaint is about an academic matter, the Head of Student Support Services will forward the complaint to the Academic Director. Where possible, the Academic Director will resolve the academic complaint informally. If this fails, the Academic Director will take a final decision. If the initial intervention by Head of Student Support Services fails, and the complaint is in relation to a non-academic matter, such as bullying or services, the complainant will be invited to submit a formal letter to the Director. The Director will then take a final decision and communicate this to the complainant. In terms of external review of student complaints, at the time of the review, the School was not a subscriber to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for HE complaints scheme, but clarified in a meeting with the review team that when operations begin in the UK, it will sign up.

2.41 There are separate processes in place for dealing with academic appeals. Students can submit academic appeals to the Academic Director using a form that is available on the School's VLE. The Academic Director will decide at this point whether the appeal falls within the four categories on which an academic appeal can be launched. If the appeal is in scope, the School's Appeal Committee will consider the arguments presented during an Appeal Hearing and decide whether an adjustment to the awarded mark or grade is necessary. Not all academic appeals will require an appeal hearing, for example where there is a very clear-cut case. Any proposed adjustment to mark or grade will be forwarded to the relevant Exam Board for final approval.

2.42 During the visit, the review team noted that although the complaints and appeals processes would allow for such matters to be dealt with quickly, elements of the process were underdeveloped. For example, for the academic appeals policy, there is little information available on how an appeals hearing would proceed, including who would be invited. Highlighting this during the review, senior staff informed the team that they were currently working on a revised complaints and appeals process that would bring the School in line with UK providers. The team reviewed the proposed new processes and confirmed this would address concerns raised during the review process. The senior staff confirmed that a new complaints and appeals process would be in place for Summer 2024. Given that the School identified gaps in its complaints and appeals processes and was significantly into the process of developing a new and improved system, the team **affirms** the steps being taken to review, revise and develop the School's complaints process so that it is ready by Summer 2024.

2.43 Students, staff, and other stakeholders are signposted towards the School's complaints policy and academic appeals policy in key documentation, including: the Student Charter, Rules and Regulations, Research Ethics Policy and Procedures, at induction, and also in each course handbook. Information can also be found online through the School's website and its VLE. Course handbooks direct students to the relevant student complaints and appeals policies through their course coordinator who acts as a first point of contact for any student inquiries.

2.44 All complaints and appeals are recorded in a central log that is held by the Academic Director. The review team sampled the most recent complaints log from 2023 and could confirm that complaints and appeals were being recorded in an appropriate and systematic fashion. Any new complaints and appeals are taken to the School's Technical Committee, which meets weekly. This approach allows the School to respond quickly to any issues arising from the complaints and appeals process. Separately, the central complaints and appeals log is overseen by the School's Course Committee, which then reports to Academic Board.

2.45 In summary, the School has policies and procedures in place to deal with student complaints and academic appeals that are fair, transparent, and accessible to all students. Effective monitoring and oversight of student complaints and academic appeals is achieved at various levels. While the review team did identify some elements of the School's complaints and appeals processes that were underdeveloped, the School had identified this as an area for development. At the time of the review, the School is developing an entirely new complaints and appeals process, due for implementation in Summer 2024. The team concluded that the School has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. The Core practice is therefore met with an associated low risk.

Core practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q7): Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.

Findings

2.46 The School does not offer research degrees.

Core practice (Q8): Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

Findings

2.47 Working in partnership with UK universities and awarding bodies has been central to the School's approach since it has been established. The importance of partnership working is reiterated in the RBS strategy, where one of its key objectives over the five-year period from 2022-27 is to 'develop and strengthen' its partnerships. The focus is to 'Increase our collaboration with our existing academic partners through the delivery of new programmes' and 'Develop further strategic partnerships with new partners to meet our expansion needs'.

2.48 The review team examined the School's most recent partnership with the University of Suffolk. While the sample of responsibilities provides an overview of where responsibilities for different activities lie, the detail is more apparent in the QAA Partnership Responsibilities Checklist. This document lists the activities according to whether they are the responsibility of the School, the awarding partner or both. The review team explored aspects of partnership working in meetings with senior staff, academic staff and staff of the University of Suffolk. The review team was reassured that the School's experience of working in partnership meant that they were highly likely to continue to work effectively once the UK campus started operations. Senior staff from the School who met the team were able to outline details of how they interacted with partners in detail. Senior staff and the staff from the University of Suffolk were also able to provide examples of changes to curricula, arrangements for teaching and learning, the provision of external examiner feedback, and the approval of teaching staff.

2.49 The School's experience of working with other UK university partners to deliver higher education programmes to date has mainly been in relation to partnerships with Leeds Beckett University. The review team considered the Leeds Beckett Annual Monitoring Report (2021-22) which offers (at the level of the provider/awarding body partnership) a course-by-course breakdown of partnership, indicating the numbers of enrolled students, progression data, module awards, and degree outcomes by which the success of the programme can be evaluated. More detailed information is evident at the programme level in the Annual Course Review document which also integrates students' evaluative comments on their learning. These documents provide evidence that the School has acted on the student feedback in the Course Review document through an action plan and closure of the feedback loop to students.

2.50 The School also has experience of working in partnership with a range of other awarding bodies, specifically in relation to the offering of diploma-level qualifications. These include being an Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) partner in learning, as well as being accredited by the Confederation of International Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology (CIBTAC), the CTH and the Chartered Institute of Management (CIM) through which diploma-level qualifications are awarded. The review team considered that the School demonstrated its ability to work effectively in partnership with a range of awarding bodies.

2.51 The Partnership Responsibilities Checklists relating to five of the School's other partnerships also demonstrate that it can operate differentially, depending on the various awarding bodies' requirements. For example, the partnerships with Leeds Beckett University and the University of Suffolk giving feedback to students on their work is the School's responsibility, whereas the arrangement with CIBTAC makes it apparent that this is a

responsibility shared by the School and the awarding body. During the visit, the meeting with senior staff highlighted to the review team how such awarding bodies typically have an account manager who would consult with a corresponding course coordinator at the School to ensure that the School meets its responsibilities.

2.52 In summary, based on the evidence in relation to the existing Mauritian and planned UK operations, the review team considers that partnership working will continue to operate effectively in respect of the UK campus and that the academic experience for students is likely to be high quality and therefore the Core practice is met with an associated low risk.

Core practice: Met

Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q9): The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Findings

2.53 The School has made the provision of comprehensive student support services a key strategic objective to support academic success and personal and professional development at its Mauritius and UK campuses. The School's approach is described in the Student Support Policy which describes key elements of student support including: a personal tutor system (academic), a dedicated course coordinator, a part-time counsellor, a student welfare programme, IT support services and academic support services.

2.54 Course handbooks are a key resource for students to inform them about the support available and how to access it. Programme handbooks make direct reference to the Student Charter, which describes what students can expect regarding support, both academic and pastoral. The review team heard from students that they have ready access to information about the support available to them but emphasised that because of the small cohorts, their first point of contact is usually informally through a member of their course team.

2.55 The Personal Tutor Policy describes the approach that will be taken at the planned UK campus, which is based on the current approach adopted at the School's Mauritius campus. The policy states that all students are allocated a named personal tutor and that the personal tutor will be a member of the School's academic faculty. Personal tutors will meet formally with their tutees on a regular basis, at least once per term/semester, whether on a 1-2-1 basis or as part of a group. In addition, one-to-one personal (academic) tutor meetings can be at the request of the student or tutor. Personal tutors are expected to provide support and guidance, including signposting on both academic and pastoral matters.

2.56 In addition to the pastoral support inherent within the personal tutoring system the School references its Student Engagement Strategy and Policy; Student Support Policy; Student Protection Plan Contingency Adverse Effects; and Safeguarding Policy. Collectively, the review team considers that these policies provide a sound basis for the School's approach to supporting students for their welfare. For example, the Safeguarding Policy clearly states that the School will provide a physical and emotional environment that is healthy, safe and secure. The review team heard from students that they were considered as individuals and not, as they put it, as 'a number' and in this regard felt fully supported by the School.

2.57 Academic and pastoral support will be monitored at departmental course level meetings which comprise the course coordinator and leader and Director of Academics. Together they use data in relation to student attendance, engagement (for example their use of the VLE) and academic performance to consider each student's progress against the course benchmarks. Minutes from a meeting of School and University of Suffolk staff on the BSc (Hons) Nursing programme show that the University also offers support for franchised students in the form of access to University library and learning resources.

2.58 The review team heard that the School plans to enhance the student experience and potential outcomes through operating two campuses, the UK and the existing Mauritius campus. It is planned that UK-based students will have the opportunity to study in Mauritius, and students based in Mauritius the opportunity to study in the UK. Staff and students expressed enthusiasm for international mobility for both positive academic and professional outcomes. In addition, the School plans to have staff who will teach between campuses on shared courses to enhance the student experience and promote positive academic and professional outcomes with staff able to inform their subject matter and delivery through their international experience. The team considered that these opportunities would expose both

staff and students to a wider range of subject-related experiences and to personal and social experiences which would provide a broader perspective that would enhance the academic and professional outcomes for students.

2.59 The review team considers that the plans to allow students and staff to study and work at both the Mauritius and UK campuses to enhance the student experience through international mobility and promote positive academic and professional outcomes will make a particularly positive impact on the student experience and support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. As such, the team considered this initiative to be a feature of **good practice**.

2.60 In conclusion, the review team considered the School has a positive record of supporting students to help them to achieve positive academic and professional outcomes. The review team found that there is currently a good understanding of the differing responsibilities of staff undertaking support for students, both academic (for example personal tutors and module tutors) and professional support staff and that these roles were effectively integrated, albeit on an informal level, given the current scale of provision. Because the team was able to draw on a wide range of evidence, including meetings with school staff, students and with representatives of the key awarding body, the team concluded that the Core practice is met with low risk.

Core practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

Common practice (1): The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Findings

2.61 The School's approach to monitoring and review is based on its experience of working with a range of different awarding bodies. Therefore, the practices and processes that have developed to review Core practices for quality have been determined by the awarding bodies with whom the School works in partnership. The review team found that the review of education provision is evident through the formal processes that awarding bodies have put in place. For example, the review team considered evidence relating to the annual monitoring of provision undertaken as part of the arrangement with Leeds Beckett University. The annual monitoring process was complemented by self-evaluations which had been undertaken by academic staff at RBS. These documents revealed that reflection on the delivery of programmes takes place regularly and that the processes in place were such that ongoing enhancement of provision was a feature of the School's Mauritian operation.

2.62 The review team also considered evidence relating to the more recent partnership with the University of Suffolk, which would be the main University awarding partner in respect of the RBS UK operation. Formal, quarterly meetings between the School and the awarding body in the form of a Partnership Management Group indicated to the team that mechanisms exist which allow the School to review the quality of provision effectively and, by doing so, help enhancements to be made. The formal governance arrangements were complemented by effective communication channels between the School's staff and its corresponding link tutors, or account managers employed within awarding bodies.

2.63 The School's Academic Board terms of reference include the overarching assurance of quality and the oversight of teaching and learning quality. The review team examined the minutes of two recent meetings of the Academic Board. These indicated that the Board had considered comments from student evaluations and had considered other aspects of quality, specifically in relation to the conduct of exams.

2.64 The review team considered action plans from the meetings of Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs), as well as from a student survey. The actions from SSLC meetings clearly identify a responsible party, a time for completion and a section on completion status. This indicated to the review team that RBS had in place processes which ensured that suggestions from students were acted upon, and importantly, which also allowed the feedback loop to be closed.

2.65 The review team formed the view that because the School operates in partnership with UK awarding bodies, the underpinning internal policy documentation has not been developed to the same extent as if it had been operating independently. Instead, the School is expected to meet the requirements of awarding bodies for monitoring and enhancement and looks to address these primarily. The team considered that the School actively reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and looks to drive improvement and enhancement. Consequently the team considers the Common practice is met and the risk is low.

Common practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

Common practice (2): The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.

Findings

2.66 The School has developed a comprehensive set of academic policies and procedures that apply to all programmes. Although not explicitly referenced, the School's individual policies align with the spirit of the UK Quality Code and, naturally, follow closely the requirements mandated by the Mauritian Quality Agency in the Mauritian National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The School has access to and makes use of an extensive network of experienced providers of higher education in the UK and abroad. At its UK campus the school will work closely with the University of Suffolk and other awarding organisations. During the visit, the School confirmed to the review team that it will continue to make scrupulous use of its network of experts as they grow and expand.

2.67 External examiners provide further external expertise to support the management of academic quality and standards. The review team considered external examiner reports that confirmed academic standards were being maintained. During the review, the team heard examples of the academic staff making use of the external expertise of colleagues based at the School's awarding partners. For example, teaching staff explained how they had used feedback from external examiners and link tutors to inform and enhance their teaching and learning practice. Furthermore, senior and teaching staff made references to the UK Professional Standards Framework reflecting on how their teaching practice aligns to this. Separately, the team heard that staff are encouraged to gain recognition by the Advance HE/Higher Education Academy and met with teaching staff who had achieved formal recognition.

2.68 Reflecting the School's close relationship with industry sources, it established an industry advisory board, which it uses to maintain and enhance academic standards on programmes running in Mauritius. Looking forward, the School plans to replicate this approach for its UK provision, establishing a UK-based industry advisory board enabling communication between students, academics, and industrial partners.

2.69 Overall, the team concluded that the School's approach to managing quality takes sufficient account of external expertise. Therefore, the Common practice is met, and the risk is low.

Common practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

Common practice (3): The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

Findings

2.70 The review team found the School engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience. This engagement with students includes the use of Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) to ensure that the views of students are made clear in processes of module and course review. The team noted that there is an established training programme and ongoing support provided to student representatives who, when meeting with the review team during the visit, confirmed that they were prepared for their role and that the School listened to their views.

2.71 The review team heard from staff and students that the School collects and considers student feedback extensively. There are regular survey touchpoints that capture student feedback on teaching and learning, curriculum structure, and student satisfaction more broadly. Data produced by these processes is considered at both course level, through the Course Enhancement Committee, and at institutional level, using Course Leader and Quality Reports to Academic Board.

2.72 The team saw examples of student feedback being considered and leading to specific changes in the operation of services and programmes. During the visit, the team met with students and student representatives who confirmed that the School acts on their feedback, is quick to make changes wherever possible, and confirms when changes have been made to close the feedback loop. Separately, senior, academic, and professional support staff all reported close working relationships with students and student representatives which allowed them to deal with student complaints and queries in real time.

2.73 The School's ongoing review of its student engagement is in progress and being supported by the School's awarding partners, including the University of Suffolk. A key outcome from this review are plans to ensure more systematic representation of students on key quality committees. Going forward, the School has confirmed that it expects all key quality committees and boards will include student representation including Academic Board. On balance, the team considered the plans put forward to address gaps identified by the School were a positive step that would allow the School to engage students and student representatives more fully in quality matters.

2.74 The review team considers that there are areas for development; however, at the time of the review the School had put in place credible plans to address these areas and had already made progress. The team concluded that there were sufficient opportunities for students and student representatives to engage in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience. Therefore, the Common practice is met and the risk is low.

Common practice: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.1 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. All Core and Common practices are met with low levels of associated risk.

3.2 The review team makes one recommendation in this section, relating to the quality of student learning opportunities, and this recommends the School make all policies and procedures, in particular the Admissions Policy, publicly available for all stakeholders. The level of risk associated with this was assessed as low because the issue was one that could be implemented in a timely manner.

3.3 Three affirmations were identified in this section. First, the steps being taken to identify and make available a suitable online learning resource package and have it in place by Summer 2024. Second, the work underway as outlined in the School Student Engagement Strategy and Policy document to actively engage students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience. Third, the steps being taken to review, revise and develop the School complaints process so that it is ready by Summer 2024.

3.4 One example of good practice was identified in this section which related to the plans to enable students and staff to study and work at both the Mauritius and UK campuses to enhance the student experience through international mobility and promote positive academic and professional outcomes.

3.5 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the School **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 in the [Higher Education Review \(Foreign Providers\) 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**).

Common practices

Practices included in the UK Quality Code that will be applied by providers in line with their missions, their regulatory context and the needs of their students. These are practices common to the underpinning of quality in all UK providers but are not regulatory requirements for providers in England (registered with the Office for Students).

Core practices

Practices included in the UK Quality Code that must be demonstrated by all UK higher education providers as part of assuring their standards and quality.

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.

Expectations

Statements in the **Quality Code** which clearly and succinctly express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision.

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** (and associated, applicable, Core and Common practices) that 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.

QAA2840 - R14610 - May 24

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2024
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557000
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk