



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of International Business College Manchester Ltd

October 2016

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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). The review took place from 4 to 6 October 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Andrew Gower
- Ms Barbara Howell.

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

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of threshold 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.

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

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.² A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms, please 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/about-us.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about International Business College Manchester Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at International Business College Manchester Ltd.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of awarding organisations **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 features of **good practice** at International Business College Manchester Ltd:

- the provision of prompt and helpful feedback on assessment outcomes supporting student progress and achievement (Expectation B6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to International Business College Manchester Ltd.

By January 2017:

- ensure that clear and comprehensive complaints and appeals policies and procedures are accessible for prospective and current students (Expectations B9 and B2)
- review and update College policies and the student handbook to ensure they are fit for purpose (Expectation C).

By May 2017:

- articulate a strategic approach to learning and teaching practice, informed by robust reflection and evaluation (Expectation B3)
- implement a systematic internal review process for the review and monitoring of programmes (Expectation B8)
- clearly articulate the College's strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities (Expectation Enhancement).

About International Business College Manchester Ltd

International Business College Manchester Ltd (the College) is an independent provider of higher education based in Manchester, and was established in 2010. It is accredited to deliver a range of business, management and engineering awards on behalf of Pearson Education, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, and the Institute of Leadership and Management. The College shares accommodation and executive management with Berlitz Manchester, the trading name of Orient Direct Ltd, which delivers language training under the Berlitz franchise.

Following loss of Tier 4 status, the student numbers have fallen and at the time of the review there were only five students studying for awards. However, the College has a plan to increase numbers in a carefully controlled manner, and has regained its Tier 4 listing which will support this ambition.

The College was subject to a QAA Review for Specific Course Designation in June 2015. This had positive outcomes, with two features of good practice, and eight recommendations relating to record-keeping, monitoring procedures, Quality Code mapping, feedback policy and the embedding of skills assessment. The review team found progress had been made across most of these areas, though monitoring and review processes were not sufficiently systematic, and that issue is addressed in this report.

Explanation of the findings about International Business College Manchester Ltd

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

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 Pearson Education Ltd, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), as the awarding organisations, are responsible for the validation, approval and review of the programmes delivered by the College.

1.2 Formal agreement has been issued to the College by each awarding organisation. **[55, 56, 57]** The agreements confirm approval for the College to offer the awards listed on its website, and detail the responsibilities of each awarding organisation for the setting and maintenance of academic standards, including external verification and examination. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3 The review team scrutinised documentation including programme specifications, external verification and examination reports and spoke to staff and students.

1.4 Programme specifications for the HNC and HND Business, **[37]** ILM level 5 award, **[40]** ILM level 6 award, **[42]** and HND Petroleum Engineering **[41]** confirm programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor.

1.5 Discussions with teaching staff and students demonstrated awareness of differentiated levels of study. **[M2, M3, M4]** However, it was noted by the review team that

there was scope for a further clarification of programme aims and programme outcomes for the specific awards of HNC and HND Business.

1.6 The external verification and examination reports completed by Pearson, [58] ILM, [59] and SQA [60] confirm the maintenance of academic standards, with 'significant strengths' noted by SQA. [60]

1.7 Following review of the documents provided and meeting with staff and students, the review team concludes that the College is maintaining the academic standards of the awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisations, and therefore the Expectation has been met and the 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 award of academic credit and qualifications for the programmes delivered by the College are regulated by Pearson, ILM and SQA, and this point is made clearly within the approval documentation issued to the College by the awarding organisations. [55, 56, 57] The documentation both confirms responsibility of the awarding organisation in regulating the standards of its award as well as the requirement of the College, as an approved centre, to ensure compliance with awarding organisations' quality assurance processes. The structures and processes in place enable the Expectation to be met.

1.9 The review team reviewed the external verification and examination reports for Pearson, ILM and SQA programmes, [58, 59, 60] and met staff and students.

1.10 The reports confirm that the programmes meet awarding organisation requirements for the level of qualification. [58, 59, 60] It was noted by the review team that the College had implemented the improvements to assessment practices required by ILM [59] and SQA, [60] with each awarding organisation satisfied with the College's approach to internal verification and standardisation.

1.11 The College follows the regulations of its awarding organisations, as demonstrated by the steps taken to address the assessment requirements of SQA. [65] Students confirmed some awareness of assessment regulations; [M2] however, the clarity with which the College signposts students to the regulations specific to each awarding organisation is an issue addressed in a recommendation under Part C (see paragraph 3.6).

1.12 In reviewing the documents provided and meeting with staff and students, the review team concludes that the academic regulations of the awarding organisations are securing the academic standards of the programmes, and therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.13 The programmes delivered by the College are validated, approved and reviewed by three awarding organisations. The College therefore has appropriate systems in place to enable the Expectation to be met.

1.14 The review team scrutinised documentation including programme specifications, approval documentation and external verification and examination reports for Pearson, ILM and SQA programmes and met staff and students.

1.15 The approval documentation issued to the College by Pearson, [55] ILM [56] and SQA [57] demonstrates that the awarding organisations maintain the definitive record of each programme and qualification they approve.

1.16 A programme specification was in place for each approved programme [37, 38, 40, 41 and 42] and each programme is subject to an annual cycle of monitoring and review by the respective awarding organisation.

1.17 The reports confirm the College is delivering and assessing each programme in accordance with awarding organisation regulations and that it is meeting awarding organisation requirements for monitoring and review. Discussion with staff and students, and a review of example transcripts and certificates issued to students, [M2, M3, M4, 203, 206] confirmed that the College, with each awarding organisation, is managing appropriately the provision of records of study for students and alumni.

1.18 Following review of the documents provided and meeting with staff and students, the review team concludes that in principle and practice the College is meeting the requirements of each awarding organisation in its delivery of approved programmes, and that therefore the Expectation has been met and the 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

1.19 Responsibility for the processes for the approval of all taught programmes rests with the respective accrediting/awarding organisation (Pearson Education Ltd, ILM and SQA), who ensure that standards are set at the level required to meet the UK threshold standards for the qualification. The College has an active Development and Improvement Plan which covers operational planning, development opportunities and recommendations made from the respective accreditation/awarding organisations. The key priorities for the 2016/17 academic year are new course provision, online delivery and embedding digital literacy in curriculum design and assessment. **[SED pg 7, para 13]** These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

1.20 The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the processes for programme approval through consideration of the approval documentation with the accrediting/awarding organisations, **[EB 55-57]** staff meeting minutes, **[EB 61-64]** monitoring and visit reports, **[EB 11a, 58, 60, 71 & 72]** and meetings with the staff. **[Meeting 1]**

1.21 The team confirmed that the College operates programmes within the parameters of Pearson Ltd, ILM and SQA accrediting/awarding organisations as set out in the letters of approval. **[EB 55-57; Meeting 1]** The team further confirmed that discussion takes place at regular College staff meetings to confirm approval has been gained before programmes recruit students. **[EB 61-64]**

1.22 The accrediting/awarding organisations are further responsible for ensuring that the appropriate quality mechanisms are in place for the management of their respective programmes and the team was satisfied that this takes place following a review of monitoring visit reports from the three bodies. **[EB 11a, 58, 60, 71 & 72]**

1.23 It was found that the College operates programmes accredited and awarded by Pearson Education Ltd, SQA and ILM with clear operating structures that are fully understood by the staff. The Expectation is met and the level of risk 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 maintains a 'quality management system' with an associated Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy. **[SED pg 11, para 27]** The College indicates 'strict adherence to awarding organisation guidelines' with an associated Assessment and Verification Policy. **[SED pg 11/12, para 28]**

1.25 External evaluation of the College's quality assurance processes is by external verifiers from each awarding organisation who visit on a regular basis to ensure standards are maintained using standardisation quality checks. **[SED pg 11, para 25]** Module/unit specifications indicate the appropriate levels of programme and staff are aware of the differences and thus the teaching requirements of the different levels. **[SED pg 12, para 29]** The policies and procedures in place to implement the frameworks provided by their awarding organisations (Pearson Education Ltd, SQA and LMI), who are ultimately responsible for the award of credit, enable the Expectation to be met.

1.26 The review team tested the Expectation by a review of documentation, including the Quality and Assessment Policies, **[EB 10 & 11]** External Verification Reports, **[EB 12 & 13]** Standardisation meetings, **[EB 65-70]** the Verification Report Log, **[EB 207]** Programme and Unit Specifications, **[EB 37, 39, 40-41, 53-54]** Internal Verification Sampling Plan **[EB 47-48]** and the Assignment Brief Check List. **[EB 209A]** The team cross-referenced this evidence through discussions with staff. **[Meeting 4]**

1.27 The College Quality Improvement Policy outlines the College approach to ensure continuing quality improvement, **[EB 10]** which is supplemented by a more detailed Assessment & Verification Policy. **[EB 11]** The latter provides a compressive narrative on the assessment process from preparation of assignments through to the standardisation of assessment practices. **[EB 11]**

1.28 The team saw clear evidence of internal verification and standardisation processes and external oversight of both the coursework set and marks allocated. Staff met by the team were clear about the process. **[EB 12-13, 47-48, 65-70, 207, 209a; Meeting 4]** Programmes and module/unit specifications have been provided by the awarding organisation with standard learning outcomes. **[EB 37, 39, 40-41, 53-54]**

1.29 The levels of assessment as set out in the marking criteria are clear to both staff and students. 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 (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

1.30 Self-assessment is validated through monitoring and review meetings held by various groups, that is tutors, students and management, and by using the College self-assessment report. **[SED pg 11, para 26]**

1.31 Monitoring and review of all processes is undertaken by the Programme Leaders and reported at regular staff meetings, with actions from the meetings cascaded up to the management team meetings. **[SED pg 12, para 28]** External verification is undertaken by the awarding organisations and independent oversight to assure standards are maintained. **[SED pg 12, para 28]** The review team finds that the policies and procedures in place for the monitoring and review of programmes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.32 To test the Expectation, the team reviewed documentation including the Quality and Assessment Policies and action plans; **[EB 04, 09-10]** the Annual Monitoring Review and Visit Policy; **[EB 08]** Monitoring Visit Report; **[EB 12]** staff meeting minutes; **[EB 05-06, 62-64 & 70]** Quality Team meeting minutes; **[EB 82-84]** and meetings with staff. **[Meeting 1 & 4]**

1.33 The College has a Quality Improvement Policy within which Programme Leaders initiate procedures within their teams and collate and monitor assessment reports and action plans. **[EB 10]** A Quality Manual is maintained containing College policies and procedures with all documents version controlled and accessible to staff in a new quality management folder. **[EB 04 & 09, Meeting 4]**

1.34 The College has in place an Annual Monitoring Review and Visit Policy which describes the consideration of and use made of external examiners within the annual monitoring process. **[EB 08]** As part of the process the College holds annual review meetings although the latest had not been minuted. **[Meeting 1]** However, the team learnt that issues are clearly drawn together in the regular staff meetings due to the scale of the operation. **[Meeting 1 & 4]** The team confirmed that regular, scheduled, minuted learning and teaching meetings take place with Programme Leaders and teaching staff and viewed the content of those meetings to have a clear focus on standards. **[EB 05-06, 62-64, 70, Meeting 1]** Quality meetings ensure the College is meeting the awarding organisation requirements; however, they are relatively infrequent. **[EB 82-84; Meeting 1]**

1.35 The review team concludes that the College has arrangements for ensuring the maintenance of academic standards through the regular monthly staff meetings. There may be a need to have more extensive processes in place should the student numbers grow significantly. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the level of risk 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

1.36 External evaluation of the College's quality assurance processes is conducted by external verifiers of each awarding organisation who visit on a regular basis to ensure standards are maintained. **[SED pg 9, para 26]**

1.37 The review team considers that the Expectation is able to be met through the processes of the awarding organisations – Pearson Education Ltd, SQA and LMI – who are responsible for ensuring that external and independent expertise is obtained at key stages of the process for setting and maintaining academic standards.

1.38 The team tested the Expectation through a review of the Quality Improvement Policy and Quality Manual; **[EB 09-10]** Programme Leader role profile; **[EB 07]** staff meeting minutes; **[EB 06, 70, 85 & 88]** Assessment and Verification Policy; **[EB 11]** awarding organisation visit reports; **[EB 58-60]** and meetings with staff. **[Meeting 1 & 4]**

1.39 The Quality Improvement Policy describes the process for continuous improvements through self-evaluation and action planning, supplemented by a comprehensive set of policies contained within the Quality Manual. **[EB 09-10; Meeting 4]** The College Programme Leader acts as Quality Nominee with the awarding organisation and participates in Academic Management Reviews (Pearson) or equivalent and liaison with the awarding organisation /standard verifier. **[EB 07, Meeting 1]** Staff met by the team clearly understood their role. **[Meeting 4]**

1.40 The team found comprehensive evidence of a robust assessment and verification process contained within the Quality Manual to be in place. **[EB 11]** The awarding organisation visit reports in conjunction with regular staff meetings confirmed positive outcomes of external visits and satisfactory completion of any associated actions. **[EB 06, 58-60; 70, 85 & 88; Meeting 4]**

1.41 The College operates in accordance with the requirements of its awarding organisations and the team was assured that the use made of and working with external verifiers maintains appropriate academic standards. The team therefore 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

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

1.43 All the Expectations are met and the level of risk in each is low. No features of good practice were found, nor were any recommendations or affirmations made.

1.44 The College delivers programmes on behalf of Pearson Education, SQA and ILM. It discharges its responsibilities appropriately, drawing on external advice and support, and also from staff and students. The College takes steps to ensure that its activities are aligned with all relevant external reference points.

1.45 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its awarding organisations **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 The College operates awarding organisation programmes to include: ILM accredited leadership and management programmes from level 3 through to level 6, Pearson qualifications from level 4 to level 5 (with levels 3 and 7 in development), SQA petroleum engineering at levels 4 and 5, and bespoke professional management training as approved by their accredited awarding organisations. **[SED pg 4, para 2]**

2.2 The review team considers that the process of programme design, development and approval rests with the awarding organisation therefore allowing the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The team tested the Expectation through a review of the Qualifications log, Pearson, SQA, and ILM Approval Reports, programme specifications and meetings with staff and students.

2.4 The Qualifications log demonstrates alignment with the awarding organisations' requirements. **[001]** Approval reports confirm programme design, development and approval rests with those bodies. **[EB 1, 42, 55-57]** The College is delivering programmes using standard programme specifications devised by Pearson, SQA and ILM. **[EB 37-41]** The staff and students met by the team further confirmed these arrangements and staff confirmed an understanding of their responsibilities. **[Meeting 1, 2, 3 and 4]**

2.5 The team concludes that the College operates within the scope of the awarding organisations therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk 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

2.6 The recruitment of prospective students is the responsibility of the College working within its own policy and procedures. The admissions criteria determined by the College reflect the entry profile of students recommended by the awarding organisation of each programme.

2.7 The admissions documents are publicly available from the College's website [210] and set out a clear process of application, assessment, compliance checking, enrolment and induction, differentiated for applicants resident in the European Economic Area and for applicants resident overseas. These indicate that the College has the appropriate infrastructure to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.8 The review team tested the Expectation by review of documentation and discussion with students and staff.

2.9 Discussion of the admissions process with staff confirmed the stages of enrolment set out in the documentation available to prospective applicants, and students confirmed their satisfaction with the admissions process they had experienced, including induction to their programmes. [210, M2, M3, M4]

2.10 However, the review team noted that while a complaints policy was available from the College's website [210] there was no policy explicitly referring to admissions appeals. The review team also noted that there were inconsistencies in the published complaints and appeals policies. These issues are addressed in a recommendation under Expectation B9 below (see paragraph 2.61).

2.11 Following review of the documents provided and meeting with staff and students, the review team concludes that the College's policies and procedures provide the basis for transparent, reliable and inclusive recruitment, selection and admission, and therefore the Expectation has been met and the level of risk 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

2.12 The College has in place a Development and Improvement Plan, which references learning and teaching development, staff development and course evaluation. The College makes available documentation, including handbooks and assignment briefs, which support students in completion of their programme.

2.13 The review team therefore concludes that the College has appropriate approaches to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.14 To test the Expectation, the review team scrutinised documentation including the external verification and examination reports for Pearson, ILM and SQA programmes and spoke to staff and students.

2.15 The College's documentation provides evidence of a system of course evaluation, [33] peer observation of learning and teaching [31] and the holding of quality meetings attended by members of the teaching team. [82, 83, 84]

2.16 The learning and teaching activities provided by the College offer students the opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes. [58, 59, 60] Students are offered individual reviews and personal and professional development sessions with programme leaders to discuss issues experienced since starting the course and to discuss actions to enhance their student experience. Student reviews and tutorial meetings are further described as a mechanism to summarise student experience early to improve student retention and success rates. [SED pg 14, para 36; pg 15, para 41]

2.17 The review team's discussion with students confirmed that they received an induction to the College and their programme. [M2] They also confirmed they were aware of assignment deadline dates and that they received timely and detailed feedback on their coursework assignments (see the good practice noted in para 2.46 below). However, while discussion with staff and students confirmed that learning and teaching activities provided opportunity to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes, there was not sufficient evidence of a strategic approach to learning and teaching that promoted shared understanding amongst staff. [M1, M3, M4] It was unclear, for example, how the system of peer observation [31] is supporting reflection and evaluation of current practice. The review team therefore **recommends** that the College ensures it articulates a strategic approach to learning and teaching practice, informed by robust reflection and evaluation. The current approach retains increased risk due to the need to articulate a strategic approach that assures continued effectiveness in the enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practices. In addition, more broadly, the closely related need to ensure formalised strategic oversight and co-ordination of quality management through programme review is addressed in a recommendation in paragraph 2.55 below.

2.18 Following review of the documents provided and meeting with staff and students, the review team concludes the College's policies, procedures and practice provide a sufficiently secure basis to support ongoing review of learning opportunities and teaching

practices. However, the lack of a strategic approach to learning and teaching practice has the potential to put student experience at risk. Therefore, the Expectation has been met and the level of risk moderate.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.19 The College's monthly staff meeting is the primary means by which the institution coordinates the arrangements and resources for its higher education. Implementation of actions recorded within staff meetings is achieved through quality meetings and standardisation meetings, which are held when required.

2.20 The team found that the College's operational approach to quality management enables the Expectation to be met.

2.21 The team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including minutes of staff meetings, quality meetings [82, 83, 84] and standardisation meetings, [65, 66, 67, 68, 70] and by speaking to staff and students.

2.22 The College's commitment to student development and achievement is confirmed by standing agenda items within staff meetings that include updates on student progress, feedback from students, feedback from external review and staff training. [6, 61, 62, 63, 64]

2.23 The review team's discussions with staff confirmed a highly personalised approach to programme delivery that was responsive to the needs of students. [M1, M3, M4] For example, the College adapted the teaching timetable to accommodate the external commitments of a student in full-time employment, and students confirmed the use of individualised learning plans as well as the provision of advice and guidance that supported their academic progression. [M2] In addition, students commended the College on its responsiveness to their feedback, which included the prompt repair of computing equipment required to support their studies. Staff confirmed that awarding organisation requirements for group work are addressed through assessment design and collaboration between student cohorts. [M3, M4]

2.24 Following review of the documentation provided [6, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 82, 83, 84] and meeting with staff and students, the review team noted that while the College was responsive to issues as they arose, the effectiveness of the College's approach to quality management could be enhanced through a more systematic approach (with this issue addressed by the recommendation under Expectation B3).

2.25 The review team concludes that the College has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential and the Expectation has been met and the level of risk 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

2.26 The College has operated a student forum to engage student perspectives in the management of learning and teaching and has a variety of processes to capture student views. Therefore, the College has appropriate systems in place to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.27 The team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including the Course Evaluation Form, [EB 33] peer observation of teaching materials, [EB 29 and 31] student meeting minutes, [EB 80-81] the Student Course Representative Nomination Form, [EB 78] and meetings with staff and students. [Meeting 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5]

2.28 In September 2014 the College created a student forum. [SED para 60] However, the self-evaluation document notes that currently the College has no student representatives due to low student numbers, but that the forum is due to be resurrected in the 2016 autumn term. [SED pg 10, para 22] The engagement of students in shaping their learning opportunities includes an end-of-module evaluation process and the active facilitation of student suggestions. [SED pg 18, para 53; pg 15; para 41] The College further operates a peer observation of teaching scheme which applies to all teaching staff and includes students as observers in the process, with the outcomes of the peer reviews used to identify staff development needs. [EB 29 and 31; Meeting 4 & 5] [SED pg 4, para 46, M3]

2.29 In 2015 a number of student forum meetings had taken place. [EB 80-81] The College had intended to resurrect the student forum in autumn 2016; however, due to the very small numbers on programmes this year, it has been decided to reintroduce this as numbers grow. [SED para 22 EB 78, Meeting 1, 3 & 4] However, the team was satisfied that the students have ample opportunity to provide feedback through a responsive open door policy, completion of an end-of-module questionnaire on facilities, materials, and personal progress, and anonymous feedback via a suggestion box. [EB 33; Meeting 1, 2, 3 & 4]

2.30 Both staff and students met by the team gave several examples of rapid changes in response to feedback, therefore the team viewed the current approach to student engagement adequate. [Meeting 2 & 3]

2.31 Overall, the review team considers that students have the opportunity to make individual representations. The College acknowledges that it will be appropriate to strengthen student representation as cohort sizes increase. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk 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

2.32 The College quality management systems include processes to ensure adherence to awarding organisation guidelines on the management of assessment and internal verification. **[SED pg 11, para 28]** The institution also has an active Development and Improvement Plan which covers the key priorities for assessment. **[SED pg 7, para 13]** These elements indicate that the College has appropriate systems in place to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.33 The team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including the Learning Policy, **[EB 17 & 91]** the Initial Assessment Policy, **[EB 16] [EB 210]** Assessment and Verification Policy, **[EB 11]** assignment briefs, **[EB 51-52]** Internal Verification forms and assessor feedback, **[EB 27, 49-50]** programme assessment and internal verification plans, **[EB 44-48]** student progress update reports, **[EB 204]** the Assignment Brief Checklist, **[EB 209A]** awarding organisation visit reports, **[EB 58-60 & 71]** the continuing professional development (CPD) Training Matrix, **[EB 34]** College staff meeting minutes, **[EB 06,26 & 69]** Programme Leaders role description, Standardisation Meeting minutes, **[EB 25] [EB 07]** and meetings with staff and students. **[Meeting 2, 3, 4 & 5]**

2.34 Students receive an initial assessment and complete an individual learning plan. **[SED pg 8, para 16; pg 14, para 34 & 37; pg 21, para 65]** Assignment briefs follow assessment criteria laid out by the awarding organisation and are handed out at the start of the course with assessment dates and deadlines. **[SED pg 15, para 40; pg 16, para 42]** Regular external verification by awarding organisations takes place to ensure consistency and the maintenance of standards, in addition to quarterly internal assessment standardisation meetings, which identify tutor training needs. **[SED pg 11, para 25; pg 16, para 42; pg 18, para 52]**

2.35 All assignments are submitted electronically and analysed with plagiarism-detection software. **[SED pg 16, para 43]** Formative feedback is provided using a standard feedback form and summative feedback is provided on a standard grading criteria form linked to specific learning outcomes. **[SED pg 16, para 43]** The College undertakes an initial assessment of students' prior learning at the admissions stage and again prior to the commencement as described in the Recognition for Prior Learning Policy. **[SED pg 14, para 37]**

2.36 It is expected that an initial assessment takes place at the start of the programme to gather information on each learner's aptitude and potential and also prior learning and experience, with policies in place for both the Initial Assessment and recognition of prior learning (RPL). **[EB 16-17]** The responsibility for making the initial assessment and RPL interview rests with the Programme Leader. **[EB 17, EB 210, Meeting 2]** The awarding organisation and the students met were less clear of an initial assessment of their learning needs; however, the students fully understood the process of RPL and example submissions were found to be comprehensive. **[EB 71- 91, Meeting 2]**

2.37 An Assessment and Verification Policy and assessment planning process is in place [EB 11, 44-46] with all assignment briefs following a College checklist and internally verified as set out in the Policy. [EB 47-52 & 209a] The students are made aware of assessment regulations during induction and those met understood how to access those regulations when needed. [Meeting 2, 3 & 4] They also found the briefs clear and deadlines effectively communicated. [Meeting 2] The potential for unacceptable academic practice is mitigated by electronic submission of assignments via plagiarism-detection software. [EB 26]

2.38 Programme Leaders are responsible for devising and completing programme assessment plans, liaising with the awarding organisation Standards Verifier, compiling and issuing internal verification sampling plans, undertaking internal verifier activity and leading standardisation meetings to ensure the quality and consistency of assessment practice. [EB 06-07, Meeting 4]

2.39 A process of standardisation is in place to agree and formalise decision-making within the programme team on the grading of student assessment. [EB 25; Meeting 4] External verification is undertaken by awarding organisations and independent oversight to assure standards are maintained. [EB 58-60] The team was also given an example of a problem with duplicated exam questions that had been identified and resolved to the awarding organisation's satisfaction. [EB 69, Meeting 4] Student update reports provide an additional mechanism for ensuring that all processes for verification are complete. [EB 204] The team viewed documentation, including student update reports and found the operation of standardisation processes to be robust.

2.40 The Programme Leader role further includes providing constructive feedback to students and the team learnt that feedback was found to be very useful with a turnaround time as reported by the students of two to three days to help support a future improved submissions. [EB 27, Meeting 2 & 4] The provision of prompt and helpful feedback on assessment outcomes supporting student progress and achievement was seen as **good practice**.

2.41 Staff further undertake CPD training in relation to assessment policy and practice and those met by the team were clear about the processes. [EB 34, meeting 4 & 5]

2.42 Students were clear about what was expected of them and external verifiers and external examiners were confident that assessment standards had been maintained. The timeliness of formative feedback in supporting student progress and achievement was seen as good practice. The review team concludes that, overall, the College has a framework in place for managing assessment and the Expectation is met with the level of risk 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

2.43 The College's awarding organisations require and arrange processes of external oversight. Therefore, the College has appropriate systems in place to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.44 The team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including awarding organisation visit reports, [EB 12-13, 39, 58-60] verification records, [EB 207] Standardisation Meeting minutes, [EB 25] the Assessment and Verification Policy, [EB 11] Student Update Progress Reports, [EB 204] minutes of Staff Meetings, [EB 06, 70, 85, 88] and meetings with staff and students. [Meeting 1, 2 & 4]

2.45 Assignment briefs are externally verified by the awarding organisations to provide independent oversight. [SED pg 12, para 28] External evaluations also take place by external verifiers of each awarding organisation who visit the College on a regular basis to ensure their standards of delivery are met. [SED pg 11, pg, 11, para 26] External examiner reports from the awarding organisations are discussed with management and staff and are formally built into the process of business planning and performance review. [SED pg 12, para 29]

2.46 The team found clear processes in place for the external review of assignment briefs and the College documents when the process is complete. [EB 204; Meeting 4] As set out in the Assessment and Verification Policy any feedback and recommendations arising from external verification will be disseminated to the relevant staff and to management. [EB 11] The team saw evidence that appropriate consideration of feedback from awarding organisation visits had taken place at the regular monthly staff meetings. [EB 06, 12, 13, 39, 58-60, 70, 85, 88 & 207]

2.47 The students met by the review team indicated an understanding and awareness of the role of the external verifier, and had seen a summary of their reports and the resultant action taken. [Meeting 2]

2.48 Externality is well embedded in the College's quality assurance systems and makes appropriate use of externals' expertise. The 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

2.49 The College has monitoring procedures, including Annual Review meetings to monitor trends in student achievement and progression. The College therefore has appropriate systems in place to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.50 The review team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including that relating to Annual Monitoring Review, the Quality Assessment and Improvement Policy, the Development and Improvement Plan, Staff and Quality meeting minutes and meetings with staff and students.

2.51 As set out in the Annual Monitoring Review and Visit Policy, the College states that annual monitoring is one of the key quality management and enhancement processes. **[EB 8]** The processes are expected to enable reflection on the previous academic year and note key issues at unit/module and programme level gained from feedback from students, staff and external examiners. **[EB 8 & 10]** It is further expected that actions resulting from the review process will be communicated to College employees via both team and/or individual meetings and also the annual College self-assessment report and Quality Improvement Plan. **[EB 10]**

2.52 The team found clear evidence of ongoing processes of review and enhancement in the College Development and Improvement Plan and also of external examiner visits and input. **[EB 2, 4 & 12-13]** Annual Monitoring is further described as a formal cross-awarding organisation review and the team heard that Quality meetings ensure their requirements are in place, although found the scheduling of those meetings to be less than systematic. **[EB 82-84 & Meeting 1]**

2.53 The College also describes Annual Review meetings as a further mechanism; however, the most recent of those meetings had not been documented, partly as a consequence of small student numbers and resultant strategic refocusing. **[Meeting 1]** However, regular monthly staff meetings captured student feedback and evidenced discussion of reviews and standardisation meetings, with action planning and follow up. **[Meeting 3] [EB 5-6, 62-63 & 70; Meeting 4]**

2.54 The College further collects course-level student feedback, enrolment statistics and records student performance data in order to monitor student achievement and progression; however, the team was not clear of the formal documented use of such data. **[EB 03, 33, 208b & Meeting 1 & 3]**

2.55 The College, in the context of its currently small student organisation, relies on the external awarding reviews and monthly staff meetings to maintain academic standards and assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities. Annual monitoring processes are in place but have not been systematically or robustly adopted. The team therefore **recommends** that the College implement a systematic internal review process for the review and monitoring of programmes.

2.56 The absence of a systematic internal review process for the review and monitoring of programmes could put student experience at risk. The Expectation was found not to be met with the level of risk moderate.

Expectation: Not met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.57 The College has a publicly available Complaints Policy and an Assessment and Verification Policy in place and states that it encourages students to engage with tutors and management. **[SED pg 20, para 62]** Therefore, the College has appropriate systems in place to enable the Expectation to be met.

2.58 The review team tested the Expectation by considering documentation, including the complaints and appeals procedures, Student Handbooks, **[EB 94]** Assessment and Verification Policy **[EB 11]** and meetings with staff and students.

2.59 The Assessment and Verification Policy sets out the need to make the students aware of the appeals procedure should there be any dispute about an assessment decision. **[EB 11]** A four-stage Appeals Policy is in place and can be found on the College website; however, the Student Handbook makes no reference of a process or signpost to its location. **[EB 94, 103, <http://www.internationalbusinesscollege.co.uk/policies/>, & Meeting 2 & 4]** The review team heard that staff were not fully clear about the operation of the appeals process as set out in the Policy. **[Meeting 1, 2 & 4]** There is also no specific published process for an appeal of an admissions decision, although there was an avenue through the online complaints policy. **[EB 94]**

2.60 The students that the review team met had been informed about the complaints procedure during induction and expressed confidence that they could readily access staff or management to raise a complaint. **[Meeting 2]**

2.61 The Student Handbook does make reference to a complaints procedure, although the procedure differs from that set out in the Complaints Policy. **[EB 94, 104 & Meeting 3]** The handbook makes reference to contact with an Academic Director and Managing Director, whereas the policy refers to the Principal, the student handbook also describes a two-stage process, whereas the policy refers to four stages and the completion of a complaints form. **[EB 94, 104 & 201]** Further, there is no clear publicly available Appeals Policy and no clear route for applicants to appeal admissions decisions (as noted in paragraph 2.7); there is also inconsistency in reference to the awarding organisation as the final adjudicator. This inconsistency in the described processes to manage complaints and the lack of clear signposting to an Appeals Policy with an admissions element has the potential to disadvantage students and applicants. The team therefore **recommends** that the College ensures that clear and comprehensive complaints and appeals policies and procedures are accessible for prospective and current students.

2.62 Students are aware of complaints and appeals opportunities; however, the information provided is inconsistent and admissions appeals are not transparently accessible, which potentially places students and applicants at risk. The review team concludes that the Expectation is not met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

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

Findings

2.63 The College has not delegated any aspect of the provision of learning opportunities to others, therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

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

2.64 The College does not offer research degrees, therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.66 Across the 10 Expectations, eight were found to be met and two were not met. The associated risk was low for seven Expectations and medium for three Expectations. One feature of good practice was found, and three recommendations and no affirmations were made.

2.67 Learning and teaching activities provide students with the opportunity to achieve the intended programme learning outcomes. However, the review team found that a more strategic approach to learning and teaching would contribute significantly to the College's quality management and enhancement system, which is reflected in a recommendation under Expectation B3.

2.68 The College operates its quality management system under the supervision of its awarding organisations. However, its own internal annual monitoring process is relatively new and has not been fully embedded, and this is reflected in a recommendation under Expectation B8.

2.69 The College regards the quality of student learning as a central element in its operation. The review team found evidence to support this claim, including the provision of high quality feedback to students, which is reflected in the recognition of a feature of good practice under Expectation B6. However, the College's articulation and dissemination of its Complaints and Academic Appeals Policies require attention, reflected in a recommendation under Expectation B9.

2.70 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the College **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 produces information for a variety of audiences, including the public, prospective applicants, current students and alumni, presented through the website and College handbooks, as well as records of student achievement. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.2 The review team tested the Expectation by a review of the College website, documentation including publicly available policies, student handbooks, and meetings with staff and students.

3.3 Staff confirmed that all information available to the general public is approved for publication by the Principal (Managing Director), which includes a description of the mission, vision and values of the College, as well as information about each of the programmes that the College is approved to deliver by their awarding organisations. **[M1, M3, M4]**

3.4 The review team confirmed that information regarding the admissions procedure was available on the website **[210]** and that the information provided set out clearly the College's process of application, assessment, compliance checking, enrolment and induction (see paragraph 2.7). The review team noted that there was no transparent admissions appeals process, and this is covered under the recommendation in Expectation B9 (see paragraph 2.61). It was nevertheless noted by the review team that at the time of review students wishing to make an appeal against an admissions decision would be able to pursue their request through the complaints procedure. **[104, IBCM-Student-Complaints-Procedures-v1.0]**

3.5 The review team's scrutiny of documentation available to students included the College handbook, **[94]** a learner handbook for the HNC and HND Business, **[96]** and an example assignment brief for the HND Business. **[51]** Discussion with staff confirmed the routine issue of this documentation to students, and discussion with students confirmed their satisfaction with the quality of information received, including the description of the modules that comprise their programme within the learner handbook. However, a review of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy **[10]** indicated that it did not accurately describe the current role and responsibility of senior staff within the College, making reference to 'the Corporation' (point 5.9) and 'the Deputy Principal' (point 6). Additionally, the summary of programmes being delivered at the College needed to be updated in the student handbook, **[94]** and staff confirmed they were aware of a need to renew this information. In addition, the review team noted that students expressed differing levels of awareness of their programme's assessment regulations, and that limited information or signposting to information on the regulations specific to each awarding organisation is currently available in the College handbook (page 8). **[94]**

3.6 Based on the minor inconsistencies of information noted the review team **recommends** that the College review and update College policies and the student handbook to ensure they are fit for purpose. Despite these minor inconsistencies, the quality

of the information about learning opportunities procedures is broadly adequate. A review of example transcripts and certificates issued to students [203, 206] confirmed that the College, with each awarding organisation, is managing appropriately the provision of records of study for students and alumni.

3.7 Following review of the documents provided and meeting with staff and students, the review team concludes that the College produces accessible and generally trustworthy information for its intended audiences about the higher education it offers. However, minor inconsistencies found in documentation potentially place student experience at risk. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the risk moderate.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

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

3.9 The Expectation is met and the level of risk is moderate. No features of good practice were found, one recommendation and no affirmations were made.

3.10 With some minor exceptions, the information provided by the College is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The College has appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the accuracy, transparency and ownership of information.

3.11 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the College **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 enhancement of the quality of learning opportunity is underpinned by an approach of close individual student support and an individualised learning experience. **[SED pg 6, para 10, M1]**

4.2 The team found that the design of the College processes for the enhancement of its provision would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3 The team tested the Expectation by a review of documentation, including the Initial Assessment Policy, **[EB 16]** New Staff Checklist, **[EB 28]** New Student Induction Checklist, **[EB 18]** Lesson Observation templates, **[EB 29 & 31]** Appraisal Form, **[EB 30]** Social Calendar, **[EB 35]** CPD Matrix, **[EB 34]** Development and Improvement Plan 2016, **[EB 04]** staff meeting minutes, **[EB 05-06, 62-65 & 69]** and meetings with staff and students. **[Meeting 2 & 4]**

4.4 During the admissions process a pre-entry assessment evaluates the suitability of the student for the chosen course and level. **[SED pg 13 & 14 para 34]** The initial assessment is based on an Initial Assessment Policy. **[SED pg 14, para 37]** Following the initial assessment and again prior to the commencement of the course the College undertakes formal testing of Maths and English, and the RPL. **[SED pg 14, para 37, M1, M2, M3]**

4.5 The induction process is further cited as enhancement with a New Student Checklist and policies in place aimed to support both the learner and the Programmes Leaders and students the review team met agreed that this was effective. **[SED pg 15, para 38, M2]**

4.6 The College has a close partnership with Berlitz Manchester Language School providing added value from the additional English classes that assist with students' understanding of business terminology and academic writing classes. **[SED pg 19, para 58]** Students are also able to access a wide range of social activities that are arranged in conjunction with Berlitz. **[SED pg 20, para 60]** Student support is further enhanced through the College operating an open-door policy and ease of access to both staff and the College management team. **[SED pg 20, para 62]**

4.7 Class sizes are restricted to allow for a focused individualised learning experience. **[SED pg 6, para 10, M1]** The College is committed to the support of professional standards for learning and teaching staff. **[SED pg 14, para 44]** Towards this aim the teaching staff are assessed prior to appointment including via the delivery of 'mini-teach' sessions, are provided with an induction and participate in peer observations to identify development needs. **[SED pg 14 -15, para 45-46]**

4.8 The principles of the College's process for pre-entry assessment are described in the Initial Assessment Policy, with staff describing the use of maths and English tests, although the students the review team met were less clear about the implementation of these. **[EB 16; Meeting 2 & 4]** A comprehensive new student induction checklist is also in

place and students confirmed they were clear about what was expected of them. **[EB 18; Meeting 2]**

4.9 The College Development and Improvement plans set out the need to integrate the student social activity and study support with Berlitz Manchester. **[EB 04]** The team found a comprehensive monthly social calendar of events is in place and the staff met by the team confirmed the use of Berlitz Manchester for study skill development. **[EB 35 & Meeting 4]** Small class size is also seen as a benefit for students, enabling closer personal development and a flexible tailored approach and the students met confirmed the value of these arrangements. **[Meeting 2 & 4]**

4.10 Teaching staff are supported by a staff induction checklist, lesson observations by both staff and students and appraisals that identify staff development needs. **[EB 18, 29, 31 & 30]** The team found comprehensive evidence of discussion and consideration of the staff development needs associated with online programme conversion, awareness of policies and procedures and assessment standardisation practices. **[EB 05-06, 34, 62-65 & 60]**

4.11 The team therefore found the initial assessment, the commitment to small class sizes, the induction process for students, the student support delivered through the relationship with Berlitz Manchester and the focused identification of staff development requirements to be enhancements that were all planned and systematic. However, there is absence of a clearly integrated and articulated institutional enhancement strategy and a consequent risk to ongoing development of learning and teaching. The team therefore **recommends** that the College clearly articulate its strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

4.12 The review team concludes that the College is taking appropriate steps towards enhancing student learning opportunities. However the lack of an integrated and articulated approach has the potential to put the student experience at risk. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.14 The Expectation is met and the level of risk is moderate. No features of good practice were found, one recommendation and no affirmations were made.

4.15 The College's institutional approach to enhancing students' learning opportunities is to offer close individual support, and this includes the implementation of early skills assessments, delivery in small class sizes, the induction process, the student support delivered through the relationship with Berlitz Manchester and the approach to the identification of staff development requirements. While the institutional enhancement strategy is not fully integrated and clearly articulated, the College has taken deliberate steps to improve the quality of learning opportunities.

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

List of evidence

[this will be deleted before publication]

- 000 QAA 2016 IBCM Self Evaluation Document v0.2.docx
- 001 Appendix 1 Qualifications Log.docx
- 002 Appendix 2 2016-MV-International-Business-College-Manchester_Final.pdf
- 003 Appendix 3 QAA 2016 IBCM Student Data 2013-2016.xlsx
- 004 Appendix 4 2016 IBCM Action Plan July 2016 Review v2.3.doc
- 004 UPDATED 2016 IBCM Development & Action Plan.doc
- 04a Responsibilities Checklist Pearson.docx
- 005 Appendix 5a Staff meetings AGENDA May 2016.docx
- 006 Appendix 5b IBCM Meeting minutes May 2016.docx
- 007 Appendix 6 IBCM Programme Leader Role Profile.docx
- 008 Appendix 7 IBCM Annual Monitoring Review and Visit Policy v1.0.docx
- 009 Appendix 8 IBCM Quality Management Folder Contents 11 07 2016.docx
- 010 Appendix 9 IBCM Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy v1.0.docx
- 011 Appendix 10 IBCM Assessment and Verification Policy v3.0.doc
- 012 Appendix 11a Pearson Report 26 05 2016.pdf
- 013 Appendix 11b ILM Report 05 04 2016.pdf
- 014 Appendix 12 IBCM Staff Recruitment and Development Policy v1.0.docx
- 015 Appendix 13 IBCM Statement of Educational Purpose v1.0.doc
- 016 Appendix 14 IBCM Initial Assessment Policy v1.0.docx
- 017 Appendix 15 IBCM Recognition of Prior Learning Policy v1.0.doc
- 018 Appendix 16a IBCM New Student Induction Checklist v1.0.doc
- 019 Appendix 16b IBCM Health and Safety Policy Statement v2.0.doc
- 020 Appendix 16c IBCM Attendance Monitoring Policy v1.0.doc
- 021 Appendix 16d IBCM Equal Opportunities Statement v1.0.docx
- 022 Appendix 16e IBCM Classroom Rules v1.0.doc
- 023 Appendix 16f IBCM Acceptable Internet and Email Use Policy v1.0.docx
- 024 Appendix 16g IBCM Social Media Policy v1.0.docx
- 025 Appendix 17 Standardisation meeting April 2016 Minutes.docx
- 026 Appendix 18 IBCM Plagiarism Policy v2.1.docx
- 027 Appendix 19 IBCM Assessor Feedback v1.0.docx
- 028 Appendix 20 IBCM New Staff Checklist and Induction v1.0.doc
- 029 Appendix 21 IBCM Lesson Observation v1.0.docx
- 030 Appendix 22 IBCM Appraisal Form v1.0.docx
- 031 Appendix 23 IBCM Observation Student Feedback Form v1.0.doc
- 032 Appendix 24 IBCM Student Welfare Policy v1.0.docx
- 033 Appendix 25 IBCM Course Evaluation Form v1.0.doc
- 034 Appendix 26 IBCM Appraisal and CPD training matrix 2016.xls
- 035 Appendix 27 Social Calendar June 2016.pdf
- 036 Appendix 28 IBCM Complaints Policy v1.0.doc
- 037 Programme Specification HND Business QCF.docx
- 038 Programme Specification (new) HND Business RQF.docx
- 039 ILM SV visit example.pdf
- 039 New ILM Level 3 Programme Specification.docx
- 040 New ILM Level 5 Programme Specification.docx
- 041 HND Petroleum Engineering Programme specification.docx
- 042 IBCM ILM Programme Approval & Review Document (programme specification) Level 6.docx
- 043 IBCM ILM Programme Approval & Review Document (programme specification) Level 7.docx
- 044 HND Sample Programme Assessment Plan~Jan to March 2016.docx
- 045 Programme Assessment Plan~Jan to March 2016 HND.docx

- 046 Programme Assessment Plan~Jan to May2015 ILM level 7.docx
- 047 IV Sampling Plan~Jan to May 2015 v1 ILM level 7 students.docx
- 048 IV Sampling Plan~Jan to May 2016 HNC.docx
- 049 Examples of IV of assignment brief prior to issue.pdf
- 050 Examples of IV Assessment decisions forms.pdf
- 051 Example of assignment brief HND ~HRD Jan 2016.doc
- 052 Example of unit assignment for HND Petroleum Engineering~ Project Management DV5J35~new 2016.doc
- 053 Example of ILM 3 unit spec~ Understanding Leadership.docx
- 054 unit specifications for ILM5 2016.doc
- 055 Pearson approval.pdf
- 056 ILM approval documentation.pdf
- 057 SQA approval documentation.pdf
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- 059 ILM SV Visit example.pdf
- 060 SQA SV visit example.pdf
- 061 IBCM Meeting minutes May 2016.docx
- 062 IBCM Meeting minutes July 2016.docx
- 063 IBCM Meeting minutes August 2016.docx
- 064 IBCM Meeting minutes and CPD activity ~ 1st September 2016.docx
- 065 HND Petroleum team meeting and standardisation~July 6 2016.docx
- 066 Standardisation meeting November 2015.docx
- 067 ILM Standardisation meeting December 2015 Minutes.docx
- 068 HND Standardisation meeting April 2016 Minutes.docx
- 069 HND Petroleum meeting minutes Aug 2016.docx
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- 071 ISI monitoring Report - Final 2015.pdf
- 072 2016 MV International Business College Mancehster_Final.pdf
- 073 Responsibilities checklist for providers without degree awarding powers 2016~SQA.docx
- 074 Responsibilities checklist for providers without degree awarding powers 2016~ILM.docx
- 075 Licencing agreement for ILM books.pdf
- 076 SQA Agreement.pdf
- 077 Assignment brief from Pearson new 2016 unit 1.pdf
- 078 Student Course Representative Nomination form.docx
- 079 Job description student coordinator.docx
- 080 Student Meeting Minutes 20 April -.docx
- 081 Student Meeting Minutes 27 May.docx
- 082 Quality meeting 14 5 15.docx
- 083 Quality QAA Man Meeting 7 April 15.docx
- 084 Quality team Meeting minutes 5 March 15.docx
- 085 IBCM MEETING MINUTES~Nov 2014.docx
- 086 IBCM MEETING MINUTES~Dec 2014.docx
- 087 IBCM Teachers Meeting 29Oct13 Minutes & Actions.docx
- 088 IBCM MEETING MINUTES April 2015.docx
- 089 Learner progress review examples.pdf
- 090 IBCM Recognition of Prior Learning Policy v2.0.doc
- 091 Anisa Awad Tracking document (RPL).pdf
- 092 Assessment update form (RPL) for work completed in previous college~Kashif Business Strategy.doc
- 093 Edexcel 6b External examination standards verification for higher level programmes.pdf
- 094 IBCM Student Handbook v2.0.doc
- 095 IBCM New Student Induction Checklist v2.0.doc
- 096 Learner Handbook ~HND Business~2016.docx
- 097 Example of Timetable.docx

098 IBCM Health and Safety Policy Statement amended version v1.1.doc
099 IBCM Equal Opportunities Statement v2.0.docx
100 IBCM Classroom Rules v2.0.doc
101 IBCM Student Welfare Policy v2.0.docx
102 IBCM Access to Fair Assessment Statement v1.0.doc
103 IBCM Appeals Policy and Procedures v2.0.doc
104 IBCM Student Complaints Policy v2.0.doc
105 IBCM Assignment Submission Procedure v2.1.docx
106 IBCM Plagiarism Policy v3.1.docx
201 Complaints Form.docx
202 IBCM Assessment and Verification Policy v4.1.doc
203 Examples of certificates, tracking and RPL.pdf
204 IBCM_Guy progress update October 2016.docx
205 IBCM_Mohamed progress update October 2016.docx
206 Mohamed qualification transcript letter v2.pdf
207 SQA Form - verification reports log.docx
208A New Booking Report IBCM.xlsx
208B New Starters - Enrolment Report IBCM.xlsx
208C Enrolment report.pdf
208D Copy of Progression Data 2016 (2).xlsx
209 Petroleum Engineering -List of units and revision dates
209A Quality Assurance IV Template - Assessments prior to issue
210 IBCM Induction Process Flowchart v3.1.docx
211 SQA Guide to assessment.pdf
212 Arrangements for Petroleum Engineering (SQA).pdf
213 SQA Centre operating agreement.pdf
215 IV assignment brief completed examples.pdf
216 Minutes 26th April 2016.pdf
217 Programme assessment plan example.pdf
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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 22-25 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#)

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

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

Academic standards

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

Award

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

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* (FHEQIS).

Good practice

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

Learning opportunities

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

Learning outcomes

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

Multiple awards

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

Operational definition

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

Programme (of study)

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

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

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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