Higher Education Review of the University of Surrey

October 2015

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Surrey. The review took place from 26 to 28 October 2015 and was conducted by a team of five reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Alison Blackburn
- Professor Susan Blake
- Dr Douglas Halliday
- Professor Chris Rust
- Miss Caitlin Jade Oliver (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review, the QAA review team:

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

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

In reviewing the University of Surrey the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The themes for the academic year 2015-16 are Digital Literacies and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

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

---

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

Key findings

QAA's judgements about University of Surrey

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at the University of Surrey.

- The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards **meet** 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 the University of Surrey.

- The development and implementation of academic support programmes to meet the needs of specific student groups (Expectation B4).
- The coherent and proactive approach to monitoring and raising progression and completion rates through institution-wide initiatives (Expectation B4).
- The institutional-level arrangements for the induction, training and ongoing support of external examiners, including access to online marking (Expectation B7).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to the University of Surrey.

By June 2016:

- make external examiner reports widely available to students and ensure full opportunities are provided for students to engage with the formulation of responses (Expectation B7)
- further clarify the nature and purpose of dual awards and provide a clearer framework for the future development of such awards (Expectation B10)
- ensure that the transcript for dual awards includes the nature of the award and the name and location of both higher education institutions involved in the delivery of the programme of study (Expectation B10).

Affirmations

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that the University of Surrey is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The steps taken to formalise and standardise the processes for admissions, and for the recognition of prior learning/credit across faculties (Expectation B2).
- The steps taken to move to a consistent, institutional approach to peer review of teaching practice (Expectation B3).

Theme: Student Employability

Placements and the Professional Training Year are an important part of the University's approach, and most programmes offer the opportunity for placements and/or embed employability skills within the curriculum. The central Careers and Employability Service supplements programme and faculty-level support for employability, and offers a range of activities from enrolment to graduation and beyond. The University of Surrey has undertaken a comprehensive review of professional training with a view to initiating a strategic change in the management and operation of professional training, careers and employability.

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

About University of Surrey

The University of Surrey (the University) awards degrees under a Royal Charter granted in 1966, although the origins of the institution date back to 1891 with the founding of the Battersea Polytechnic Institute. The University moved from London to its present location during the late 1960s and now occupies three sites on the edge of Guildford: the main campus at Stag Hill; Manor Park, which includes the sports and research parks; and student residences at Hazel Farm. Student numbers are largely unchanged from the time of the previous review, with approximately 13,500 students currently studying on academic programmes. As of December 2014, the University had 9,919 undergraduate students, 2,513 postgraduate taught students, and a further 1,096 students studying for postgraduate research degrees. The University also had 1,244 students studying on validated programmes at partner institutions in the UK and a further 220 registered for dual awards in China.

The University characterises its mission as 'a research-led institution pursuing learning, scholarship and research, and advancing and disseminating knowledge. The University is committed to working closely with its students, business, government and civil society to transition knowledge for the benefit of humanity'. The strategic direction is led by the Vice-Chancellor, with the support of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), and two Pro Vice-Chancellors with responsibility for Teaching and Learning, and for International. Since September 2015, the University has been organised into three academic faculties, each led by an Executive Dean and comprised of a number of schools, departments, divisions and research centres. Professional support services are grouped into Directorates led by members of the Senior Management Team.

The University's Charter, Statutes and Ordinances provide its governance structure. The Senate is the ultimate governing body of the University for all academic matters and receives reports from three subcommittees: the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC); the Senate Progression and Conferment Executive; and the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC). The Code of Practice for Academic Governance outlines the operation of the Senate's substructure. Business-related matters are dealt with by the Executive Board, which supports the Vice-Chancellor in his role as Chief Executive.

The ULTC has responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement arrangements for taught provision. It has four subcommittees: Admissions, Quality and Standards; Student Experience; Widening Participation; and Outreach. The URDC has responsibility for postgraduate research degree provision, with two subcommittees: Admission, Progression and Examination; and Researcher Training and Development. Faculty equivalents of the ULTC and URDC operate through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees and Faculty Research Degrees Committees. Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees are chaired by the relevant Faculty Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching, who also chair one of the

ULTC subcommittees and are members of the UTLC, allowing for close and effective linkages between faculty and central committees.

In 2012 the University undertook a strategic review of its partnership activity and is currently in the process of withdrawing from validation arrangements with all but one of its UK partners. The accredited institution arrangement with Farnborough College of Technology is to continue, and 'teach out' arrangements are in place with five other institutions. Internationally, the University offers undergraduate dual awards through Surrey International Institute-DUFE (SII-DUFE): a joint academic partnership institution with the Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE) in Dalian, China. A new partnership for the delivery of dual awards has also been recently established with Sun Yat Sen University in China, which commenced in 2015-16.

Over the last five years, the University has undertaken a substantial reorganisation of the learning and teaching infrastructure, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs). This has included changes to the committee structure, the development of new strategic priorities for teaching and learning, a revised regulatory framework for academic programmes, a move to a standardised 15-credit modular approach, and a reorganisation of the academic calendar around semesters. Since 2013, the Academic Standards Guidelines that formed the basis of the quality assurance framework have been reviewed and replaced with a suite of internal codes of practice outlining quality policies and procedures. Structural changes have also been undertaken during this period, including the redesign of the Academic Registry; the replacement of the Centre for Educational and Academic Development with two new departments for higher education and for technology enhanced learning; and the most recent Operational Review resulting in a change from four to three academic faculties.

The University had an Institutional Review by QAA in 2009, which concluded that confidence could be placed in the soundness of the management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. This review identified five features of good practice and five recommendations for action. The University has responded appropriately to the recommendations, with evidence of careful consideration and clear and timely action planning. Most of the recommendations for action have been further addressed through the major change programme outlined above. As part of its review of transnational education in China in 2012, QAA also considered the SII-DUFE partnership. This review resulted in two recommendations for action, and the University has given consideration to the points raised through the SII-DUFE Executive Group.

Explanation of the findings about the University of Surrey

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 setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   The regulations for taught programmes define awards of the University both in terms of its level within *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Norther Ireland* (FHEQ) and in terms of a minimum credit attainment threshold, consistent with the higher education credit framework for England. Level 7 modules included within the first year of integrated PhD programmes also operate within the credit framework. The University's procedures for validation and periodic review are designed to ensure that programmes meet all the requirements of the FHEQ and take account of Subject Benchmark Statements and qualification characteristics. All awards are located at the appropriate level in the FHEQ and are named in accordance with the titling conventions specified. The University has clear regulations, and appropriate policies and procedures, which would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.2   The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach through scrutiny of programme approval documentation and through discussions with staff at the review visit.

1.3   Programme approval documentation demonstrates that careful consideration is paid to FHEQ level descriptors at the point of validation. Programme learning outcomes are documented on programme specifications, and module learning outcomes are documented on module descriptors. The 2015-16 regulations have made explicit the requirement for exit award titles to be specified at validation and recorded on the programme specification, and recent guidance and templates for programme specifications reflect this approach.

External examiner reports confirm that the standards of University awards are appropriate and take account of relevant external reference points. Staff the review team met demonstrated a clear understanding of the appropriate academic levels and key external reference points for setting and maintaining academic standards.

1.4   The University makes appropriate use of external frames of reference. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.5   The University's Charter, Statutes and Ordinances provide a governance structure for the University, detailing the roles and responsibilities of senior officers of the University and the core statutory bodies and committees. The Senate is the ultimate governing body of the University for all academic matters, and the Code of Practice for Academic Governance outlines the operation and terms of reference for the Senate's substructure.

1.6   The regulatory framework governs how academic credit and qualifications are awarded and is set out in a series of documents covering assessment, extenuating circumstances, academic integrity, appeals, Boards of Studies and Boards of Examiners. These are complemented by internal codes of practice setting out policy and procedure, and providing guidance on the operation of the academic framework. The regulations and governance structure would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.7   The review team met staff and students and considered a range of evidence provided by the University, including regulations, policies, terms of reference and committee minutes.

1.8   The University's academic regulations and frameworks are consistent with national frameworks. The University has policies and procedures for the use of credit, including admission with advanced standing and the recognition of prior learning. The minutes of assessment boards reviewed by the review team demonstrate that external examiners are present to confirm that standards are met and that regulations are applied in a consistent manner. Staff and students the team met, including those at partner institutions, were familiar with the relevant academic regulations and confirmed that these were easily accessible. Students are aware of the University's requirements and references to appropriate sections of the regulations are contained in student handbooks.

1.9   The internal codes of practice have been introduced to replace the Academic Standards Guidelines previously in place. These codes clearly reference the Quality Code and set out policy and practice on all aspects of the quality framework, including the award of academic credit and qualifications. Notably, the Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback outlines the approach to assessment, including the use of generic grade descriptors at undergraduate and taught postgraduate level, to describe levels of achievement in relation to knowledge and skills. Staff reported that the codes have been well received by staff, are well embedded and that support had been provided in their use.

1.10   The review team considers the University to have comprehensive frameworks and regulations governing the award of credit and qualifications, which are well understood and effective in securing standards. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.11   Definitive information on programmes is contained in the programme specification and in module descriptors, which are produced at validation and subsequently reviewed at periodic review. Programme specifications contain core information about the programme and are made available through student handbooks and the virtual learning environment (VLE). Module descriptors are made available through an online module catalogue.

1.12   The Directorate of Quality, Enhancement and Standards holds the definitive version of each programme and manages a process for ensuring that programme specifications are updated each year to include any modifications made throughout the year. For collaborative partners the definitive documentation, and details of any subsequently approved changes, are forwarded to the University after the modification has been approved. The University approach to definitive records would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.13   The review team discussed the use of definitive records with students and staff during the review visit, and was supplied with a range of information to support the University's approach. This included quality assurance procedures for programme approval, monitoring and review; programme specifications; and module descriptors and student handbooks.

1.14   Programme specifications include details on the qualifications and titles, aims and outcomes, structure and modules. As noted under Expectation A1, learning outcomes for exit awards have also been included in programme specifications since 2013-14. Module descriptors detail the aims and outcomes, learning and teaching methods, assessment strategy, and reading lists for each module. The process for programme and module modification is clearly described, and includes different levels of approval for different levels of modification. The use of templates for programme specifications, module descriptors, and approval and review processes facilitates the production and shared understanding of the information. These documents are consistent, detailed and comprehensive, and enable the University to ensure that there are clear reference points for the delivery and assessment of programmes. The University has recently moved to an online depository for programme and module information, which will further improve the management of definitive programme records.

1.15   The University has appropriate and robust approaches for the provision and maintenance of definitive records. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.16   Programme approval processes are set out in the Code of Practice for the Design and Approval of New Programmes, and the Code of Practice for the Approval of New PhD and Doctor of Medicine Programmes, which are regularly updated and reviewed. The process of programme validation comprises four stages, beginning with design and outline approval requiring approval at faculty and Deputy Vice-Chancellor level, after which the programme proposal is further developed before submission to a validation meeting. Approval of a new programme is confirmed at the Quality and Standards Subcommittee (QSS), which oversees the process and reports to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, and the Senate. Academic standards are scrutinised throughout the validation process, including alignment with national and University requirements, and through consideration of learning outcomes and assessment design. The design of the validation processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.17   The review team explored the effectiveness of approval processes for taught programmes and research degrees by analysing relevant codes of practice and examples of validation documentation, and by meeting staff involved in programme approval.

1.18   Validation reports confirm that national and University requirements are carefully considered during the programme validation process and these reports are routinely received at the QSS. The validation process includes an external assessor from a comparable higher education institution, or a professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) representative, where relevant, to advise on academic standards and external body requirements. Validation documents are comprehensive and used effectively to ensure the setting and maintenance of standards relating to programme approval processes.

1.19   University staff are prepared for programme design by continuing professional development events and by completion of the Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching, both of which include training on the design of modules, learning outcomes and assessment. Staff involved in the programme approval processes clearly articulated the relevant external reference points and the approach to their consideration. Additionally, staff involved in programme validation panels are offered training sessions, and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the processes in place for programme approval.

1.20   Effective processes are in place for the approval of taught and research programmes, which ensure that academic standards are set appropriately and in accordance with national and University frameworks. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.21   As outlined under Expectation A1, programme and module learning outcomes are defined during the programme validation process, which includes external scrutiny and verification of standards against the FHEQ and external reference points. Procedures for assessing the outcomes of all taught programmes are set out in the Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback, which makes explicit reference to the Quality Code. Decisions on the volume
and level of credit awarded are made by Boards of Examiners. Degrees are awarded by the Senate Progression and Conferment Executive (SPACE) on authority delegated from the Senate. As part of the process, external examiners are required to confirm that academic standards meet UK and institutional requirements. The design of the process would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.22   The review team reviewed the approach taken through a consideration of relevant policy documents and scrutiny of external examiners' reports. The review team also discussed the oversight and monitoring of this process with relevant staff.

1.23   The review team confirms that the design of assessment is considered as part of programme validation and periodic review. Staff described effective support and training on assessment provided as part of the Graduate Certificate for new members of staff, which enables staff to develop assessment strategies and design appropriate assessment.
The Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback clearly sets out quality control processes that fully support fair assessment of outcomes, and includes informative and detailed appendices on assessment and feedback. This Code clearly documents the processes to be followed, and staff the team met were aware of the procedures.

1.24   The Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback contains University grade descriptors for describing student achievement for all taught programmes. These are expressed in generic terms and staff are encouraged to supplement the descriptors with additional information appropriate to their discipline. This approach permits assessments to be consistently marked to agreed standards. The extent to which generic grade descriptors are contextualised for students is described under Expectation B6.
In exceptional circumstances a Board of Examiners can request the use of scaling, which must be approved by the Chair of the SPACE. The review team saw examples of the use of scaling and found that the scaling process was well documented, operated as described, and had a detailed level of oversight by the SPACE.

1.25   Final degree classifications for all taught degrees are calculated using a standard algorithm, on the basis of credit awarded at module level. Boards of Examiners are not permitted any discretion. The review team learned from staff that this method ensured a consistent approach to the award of degrees across the University. External examiner reports routinely comment on the achievement of academic standards.

1.26   The University has appropriate and effective assessment and conferment procedures to ensure standards are maintained in the award of credit and qualifications. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): 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

1.27   Programme monitoring is undertaken annually for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes, as outlined in the Codes of Practice for Annual Programme Review. Annual programme review reports are summarised at faculty level, and overview reports are produced by each faculty for consideration at the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) or the University Research Degrees Committee as appropriate. In addition to annual review, taught programmes are also subject to periodic review every five years as outlined in the Code of Practice for Periodic Programme Review. The outcomes of periodic review are also reported to the ULTC via the Quality and Standards Subcommittee (QSS), which oversees the process. An annual report is produced for the QSS, which identifies good practice and action points arising from periodic reviews. The design of the approach to programme monitoring and review would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.28   The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach by analysing the relevant internal codes of practice and associated documentation, and through discussion with staff involved in programme review.

1.29   The process for annual programme review was recently revised for both taught and research programmes, and was implemented in 2014-15 for taught programmes and in 2013-14 for research programmes. Changes include clearer definitions of the roles and responsibilities of those involved, and formalising student input to the process.

1.30   Annual programme review reports demonstrate consideration of student achievement and progression, and external examiner comments provide an external view on academic standards. Reports are discussed at designated Board of Studies meetings, which include both undergraduate and taught postgraduate student input. All staff delivering programmes are members of the relevant Board of Studies meeting and are therefore involved in the discussion of annual reports. Staff the review team met were able to clearly articulate external reference points and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the processes in place for programme monitoring and review. Additionally, annual reports demonstrate a reasonable level of consistency across faculties, and reports conclude with actions agreed at the Board of Studies, which are routinely picked up at the next point of review.

1.31   Periodic reviews are used effectively to ensure that programmes maintain the required standards. Reports of periodic review are comprehensive and include sections on benchmarking and external referencing.

1.32   The processes in place for monitoring and review are effective in ensuring that academic standards are being maintained. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (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

1.33　Procedures for programme design, assessment of outcomes, and periodic review all include a requirement for input from external independent experts. Additional processes operate where PSRB accreditation is involved. External assessors for validation and periodic review events must be approved by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Quality and Standards Subcommittee (QSS). Nominations for external examiners are first considered by the appropriate faculty Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, with nominations being subsequently checked by the Directorate of Quality, Enhancement and Standards, and signed off on behalf of the Senate Progression and Conferment Executive. Appointments of research degrees external examiners are signed off by the Admissions, Progression and Examination Subcommittee.

1.34　During programme validation and periodic review, external assessors provide independent verification of the level of academic standards. External examiners are asked to confirm whether the University is maintaining the academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the FHEQ and other external reference points. External examiners for research degrees must confirm if a research thesis meets the requirements of the FHEQ as an original contribution to knowledge. These procedures would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.35　The review team reviewed the operation of these procedures by scrutinising relevant documents and examples of completed reports, and discussing the procedures with staff.

1.36　Criteria for the appointment of external assessors for validation and periodic review events are clearly set out in the relevant code of practice. Evidence of appointments demonstrate that these are considered against set criteria and that approval processes follow the documented procedures. Periodic review documentation demonstrates full engagement with PSRB requirements where this is required. The University has strengthened its oversight of PSRB activity during the past academic year, and all PSRB accreditation reports are now submitted to the QSS, which prepares a University response, if one is required.

1.37　The review team reviewed wide-ranging evidence of external examiner reports, confirming that the University is maintaining the academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the FHEQ and applicable Subject Benchmark Statements. External examiners for research degrees confirm the achievement of the relevant level. Discussions with staff revealed a thorough awareness of the need for external scrutiny.

1.38　The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation:　Met
Level of risk:　Low

The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards: Summary of findings

1.39   In determining its judgement on the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards at the University, the review team considered the findings against the criteria as outlined in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.40   All Expectations in this area are met and the level of associated risk is considered low in all cases.

1.41   The University has a comprehensive quality assurance framework underpinned by appropriate regulations, policies and procedures to ensure that standards are set at a level that is consistent with both UK threshold standards and internal requirements. The new internal governance arrangements and codes of practice are becoming embedded, and the latter is subject to regular internal review to ensure currency and formalise good practice. Effective use is made of external input both in the setting of academic standards and in ensuring that such standards are maintained.

1.42   The review team concludes that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards at the University **meet** 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 University's academic portfolio is regularly updated in accordance with its Strategic Plan, and new programmes are developed in line with key strategic initiatives. The procedures for programme design, development and approval are documented in the internal codes of practice, as described under Expectation A3.1. The design of the process would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.2 The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach by analysing a range of evidence, including documents relating to programme design, development and approval, as well as meeting staff and students.

2.3 The Department of Higher Education provides advice on designing curricula through the Graduate Certificate and offers bespoke workshops to supplement the support available through faculties. Training is also provided for chairs and members of validation panels, including student panel members. The support available for designing curricula is widely used and considered useful.

2.4 Students are invited to participate in programme approval via membership of the Quality and Standards Subcommittee (QSS) and through the involvement of a student member of the validation panel. Engagement with the wider student body in the design process is more limited and varies between faculties (see also Expectation B5). External involvement in the process is achieved by attendance of an external assessor at the validation panel who provides academic subject expertise. An additional external assessor may also be involved where the faculty wishes to have representation from industry. Other opportunities for external input into programme design are initiated at departmental level; there is variability between programmes on whether industry engagement is sought in the programme design stages.

2.5 The outline approval stage considers the business case, resources and institutional fit and requires sign off at various levels, including faculty, the Directorate of Quality, Enhancement and Standards (QES), the Fees and Bursaries Scholarship Group, and by members of the Executive Board. The outline approval process has recently been reviewed by the Executive Board and University Learning and Teaching Committee. A case study of a recently developed programme demonstrates a clear strategic rationale for development, and describes a coherent approach to developing the programme.

2.6 The framework for programme design, development and approval is clear and well understood by staff. Validation reports and follow-up documents demonstrate careful consideration by the validation panel, with detailed feedback provided to development teams. The procedures are effectively managed by the QES and overseen by the QSS, which receives all validation reports and exercises appropriate oversight.

2.7   The University operates effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (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

2.8   The University states that its basis for effective recruitment, selection and admission is to set appropriate entry requirements that ensure students are capable of successfully completing the programme of study. This same principle is used at the partner accredited institution, while a specific selection process applies for SII DUFE as outlined in its recruitment policies. University admissions policies and entry requirements, accompanied by information and advice, are published in a standard prospectus and on the website. The website also publicises fees, financial support, eligibility criteria for scholarships and bursaries, as well as detailing the admissions complaints procedure. Students declaring disabilities are invited to contact Disability Advisers to discuss potential needs and adjustments. The design of the process would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.9   The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach in meetings with students and admissions staff, and through consideration of relevant documents, including the admissions policies, the Code of Practice for the Recognition of Prior Learning, and statistical data.

2.10   The admissions policies for taught programmes are clear and comprehensive, and information provided to applicants during the process is deemed appropriate by students. The number of complaints from applicants regarding the admissions process is low. The review team reviewed an example of a significant change to a programme, which outlines how current students were consulted and how applicants were informed of the changes, demonstrating careful consideration to the impact of changes.

2.11   The University operates the 'In2Surrey scheme', which allows students from under-represented backgrounds to receive a grade reduction offer. Despite a proposal to expand the scheme in 2012, the numbers of applicants, and those applications that are successful, are relatively small. However, the progression data for students who have entered through the scheme so far is very positive. The University has recognised the need to address the numbers and has proposed changes for implementation during 2016, although the latest information indicates that some proposals, such as the length of the summer school, have already been scaled back.

2.12   Professional services staff working in admissions are regularly trained. Checking applications against the entry requirements is conducted by both central and faculty admissions teams, with faculties being responsible for checking any PSRB requirements. Central admissions have also moved into the Registry, working closely with faculty admissions staff, and linking through the Admissions Subcommittee, which has provided greater coordination and reduced the potential for inconsistency. A new tool has also been developed to analyse non-progression data, cross-referenced against entry qualifications, among other factors, to identify trends and any need to adjust entry requirements.

2.13   Prior to 2015-16 the approach to the recognition of prior learning was outlined in the Academic Standards Guidelines, and statistics on the usage of this approach indicate a wide

variation in numbers across faculties. While data was previously collected on successful applicants, data was not centrally collected regarding the number of unsuccessful applications, and the review team did not see evidence on how the implementation of the scheme was therefore monitored across the institution. A new code of practice has been recently introduced, which aims to address these areas, encouraging greater consistency in approach through the appointment of recognition of prior learning/recognition of prior credit assessors in each faculty, and facilitating greater collection and monitoring of data. The review team **affirms** the steps taken to formalise and standardise the processes for admissions, and for the recognition of prior learning/credit across faculties.

2.14   The review team found that the University's recruitment, selection and admission policies are transparent, reliable and fair, and that steps are being taken to improve inclusivity and widen participation. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.15   The University's approach is outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012-17, which aims to provide the highest quality of student learning experience, combining academic rigour, personal and professional development, and employability. The implementation of the Strategy is overseen by the University Learning and Teaching Committee, which annually reviews faculty learning and teaching strategies and action plans. There is a separate Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy that focuses on transforming the learning experience through technology and pedagogic innovation. The strategies, policies and procedures in place would enable this Expectation to be met.

2.16   In addition to reading relevant documentation, the review team met various staff with responsibilities for learning opportunities and teaching practices. It also met students from different programmes and levels of study, based on the University campus and at partnerships.

2.17   The review team considers the University's strategic approach to learning opportunities and teaching practices to be well articulated, and staff the team met demonstrated a shared understanding of the approach taken. Specific strategies for learning, teaching and assessment are considered in detail through programme validation and review. Annual programme review is used effectively to identify good practice and areas for improvement. Module evaluation, National Student Survey (NSS) scores and Staff-Student Liaison Committees are also used to provide staff with information on student perceptions of teaching.

2.18   The University has made significant investments in teaching facilities, including a new School of Veterinary Medicine, and expansion of the Library and Learning Centre. The development of learning spaces is considered through the Active Learning Spaces project. Higher level resource needs are managed by the Executive Board, through an annual planning round, and lower level resource decision making is delegated to facIties. Staff the review team met gave examples of resourcing needs being managed effectively at faculty level. Resources at partners are approved and monitored, with local libraries and online access to University resources for overseas partners, and arrangements for UK students to have access to the University campus library.

2.19   Library resource needs are addressed through the development of online reading lists and discussion at faculty committees, including the involvement of Faculty Engagement Librarians. General support for learning is provided by Library and Learning Support Services, notably through Learning Advisers and Information Skills Librarians. Specialist resources are available for students with particular needs. The University has developed a stable and adaptable VLE, which enables flexible learning. Both staff and students are positive about the quality of the VLE, although students said the use of this resource across modules could be uneven. While some limited concerns about learning facilities were expressed by students in relation to the availability of computers, specialist resources and some buildings, the evidence available to the review team indicates that students are generally satisfied with the learning, teaching and resources available.

2.20   Students are introduced to the learning culture at their induction. Ongoing support is provided by personal tutors, and through Learning Advisers based in the Student Personalised Learning and Support Hub (SPLASH). Programme-specific information about learning, teaching and assessment is provided through handbooks. While students met by the review team were not familiar with the full range of support available through SPLASH, all were positive about the provision of support, and those who had used such services reported that they were helpful.

2.21   Staff recruitment and development practices ensure staff are appropriately qualified for their roles. The Department of Higher Education and the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning provide staff training events, online courses and guides. Staff also attend developmental events such as the Surrey ExciTeS (Excellence in Teaching Symposium) conference and Assessment Fora. The Department of Higher Education also runs a Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching for new staff, and a Master's in Higher Education for further professional development. Staff the review team met confirmed that a good range of support and development activities are available, and that this is monitored through appraisal, with a move to central monitoring from next year. Staff at partnership institutions have the same development opportunities, and training needs are discussed with partners. The team also heard that awards are available to recognise good teaching practice and that staff are encouraged to apply for Higher Education Academy Fellowship. Students the review team met were particularly positive about the quality of teaching, but noted that staff research expertise might be more fully publicised to students.

2.22   Peer review of teaching practice is used, and most staff the review team met had participated in some form of peer review activity. The approach is currently faculty based and optional for staff, and therefore practice varies between and within faculties, with inconsistencies as regards the purpose, conduct and criteria of observation. The review team was informed that a decision has been taken in principle to move to an institution-wide policy from 2016-17. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to move to a consistent, institutional approach to peer review of teaching practice.

2.23   The University works with its staff and students to articulate, review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.24   The University's Strategic Plan includes a pledge to enhance the quality of the student experience, and this is expanded in the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Professional service departments, such as Library and Learning Support Services and Student Support Services, have strategic and operational plans linked to the overall strategy, which are monitored centrally. Oversight of student development and achievement is managed through the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) and the Student Experience Subcommittee, and through corresponding committees at faculty level. Students have support from a range of faculty and central staff, including personal academic tutors, Faculty Engagement Librarians, Information Skills Librarians, Learning Advisers and Careers Advisers. The strategies, arrangements and monitoring in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.25   The review team tested the Expectation by reading relevant documents and evaluations, through meeting academic and professional staff, and through meeting a range of students on different programmes, studying at different levels and locations.

2.26   Outreach activity helps to ensure that students from any background can access the University. The Equality and Diversity Office is responsible for policies and strategies that provide principles for fair and equitable treatment. Additional learning support and learning adjustments are available. Students the review team met confirmed that, in general, student support mechanisms work well. While students are aware of proactive support for students with additional needs, as mentioned under Expectation B2, there was evidence of some scaling back of the In2Surrey initiative.

2.27   Transition into the University is supported through a range of brochures and webpages, and pre-entry information is sent via email and e-publications. Induction sessions are scheduled with Library and Learning Support Services Learning Advisers and Information Skills Librarians, and specific sessions are provided for international students, those with additional needs and returning students.

2.28   A wide range of support is available for students in developing academic and other skills. Academic support is mainly provided through personal tutors. The University has introduced a new Code of Practice for Personal Tutoring and provides training for tutors. In addition, students can access support from Learning Advisers, who are based in the Student Personalised Learning and Support Hub (SPLASH). Faculty Engagement Librarians improve coherence with learning and teaching, and support for accessing materials is provided by faculty-linked Information Skills Librarians based in SPLASH. High-achieving students can get support from the Surrey's Top Achievers Recognised and Supported (STARS) initiative, while those required to do reassessments can benefit from the Back on Track (BOT) initiative. Student Life Mentoring also provides peer support for students.

2.29   Students the review team met were generally very positive about the support available to them, commenting specifically on induction, general library support and SPLASH. While not all students were aware of the specific support available through STARS and BOT, those who had used these services were very positive about their experience, and staff also found the services successful in supporting students. Routine evaluations are undertaken on the support available, such as that provided through SPLASH. The University

has also evaluated the impact of the STARS initiative, which has shown it effective in raising student achievement. Similarly, an evaluation of BOT indicates success in supporting student pass rates and this initiative is to be continued and extended. The review team considers the development and implementation of academic support programmes to meet the needs of specific student groups to be **good practice**.

2.30   Student careers and employability are supported by the Careers and Employability Service, which offers events, individual advice, information and contact with employers. The strategy and operational plans are defined, and the interface between schools and departments has been developed by embedding Careers Advisers at the local level. Students the review team met were generally satisfied with the opportunities available, although some reported that they would value more specialist careers advice, or a wider range of employment advice beyond the obvious career choices for their programmes.

2.31   With the exception of programmes with specific PSRB requirements, all students have the option to undertake a Professional Training Year (PTY) and are supported in this process. Students without the option of a PTY may go on internships and attend career development events. Employability is considered at programme approval and review, although it was not always explicit from the validation documentation how employability is embedded in each programme. Support is available for personal development planning, although a significant proportion of students do not take up the opportunity. The University has identified strategic actions for further development in this area.

2.32   The University has a five-year project to improve progression rates and has made significant efforts to identify areas for intervention in order to encourage successful completions. The institutional approach to monitoring and raising success rates is proactive, including the use of a weekly Case Review Management Group in the Student Services Centre, a traffic light system to identify those requiring additional support, and the more recent creation of an online business intelligence tool for analysis, monitoring and reporting. Additionally, faculty action plans are used to report to the ULTC on the impact of strategies to improve progression. The review team considers the coherent and proactive approach to monitoring and raising progression and completion rates through institution-wide initiatives to be **good practice**.

2.33   There is evidence of good liaison between Student Support Services and the Students' Union, and through regular meetings between the Director of Student Support Services, the Deputy Registrar and Students' Union officers. Central oversight through annual reports, strategic planning and positive internal audits are effective, and the approach is well understood and supported by staff.

2.34   The review team found that the University has appropriate arrangements for the provision, monitoring and evaluation of arrangements and resources to support student development. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.35   The Student Charter describes how staff and the Students' Union work together and outlines the respective responsibilities of staff and students. The Charter provides the foundation for the principles underpinning the student engagement approach and for the development of the new code of practice in this area. Student engagement opportunities include: membership of committee, validation and review panels; the course representative system; module evaluation questionnaires; and focus groups and meetings between sabbatical officers and members of the Executive Board. The design of the process for student engagement would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.36   The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach in meetings with staff and students, and through consideration of relevant documents, including the Student Charter and the Code of Practice for Student Engagement.

2.37   A key component of the University approach is course representation, which is largely organised through the Students' Union. The University puts significant emphasis on its relationship with the Students' Union, working with them in partnership. Sabbatical officers meet regularly with the Vice-Chancellor and senior staff, and Executive Deans also hold meetings with representatives once a semester. The impact of the new code of practice will be reviewed at the end of its first year, although the review team did not see explicit performance indicators against which it will be evaluated.

2.38   Training of course representatives is organised by the Students' Union, with contributions from the University, and is supplemented by a Course Representative Handbook. Currently, 70 per cent of course representatives attend training, with an 80 per cent target for next year. A regular course representative assembly is run by the Students' Union, with over 300 attending, which provides a forum for students to give feedback and share experience with each other and with University senior managers. Student activity as a representative and/or panel member is recognised on the Higher Education Achievement Record. Course representatives the review team met are positive about the training received and other undergraduate students regard the system as working well.

2.39   At the local level, course representatives attend Boards of Studies with members of the programme team. Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC) are also held, which report to Boards of Studies and provide a more informal channel for students to input their views. Case studies reviewed by the review team demonstrate how student issues have been raised and resolved through this forum. There is no standard format for the composition and operation of SSLCs, and the University will be working with the Students' Union during 2015-16 to produce a generic framework for SSLC operation. Postgraduate Researcher Engagement Forums have been recently established to enhance postgraduate research engagement.

2.40   Students are members of validation and review panels, including at partner institutions where this requirement has recently been introduced. Training for this role is provided by the University. Student involvement in the approval process is also achieved via Students' Union membership of the Quality and Standards Subcommittee, although the review team noted that attendance during the previous academic year had been low. Involvement by the wider student body in providing feedback on programme design is

dependent upon the programme team, and therefore opportunities and uptake is inconsistent across faculties.

2.41   The annual programme review process requires analysis of feedback from students, and the Students' Union are introducing a feedback form for representatives. Undergraduate students the review team met confirmed that their views are frequently sought, not just through module evaluation questionnaires but through mid-module discussions. Students are informed of the outcomes of their feedback via various means. The review team saw examples of immediate and useful changes at programme level in response to student feedback, although some students reported that the feedback loop is not always satisfactorily closed. The Students' Union has identified that more information would be helpful on the longer-term improvements that result from module questionnaires and NSS results, and the University will be working with the Students' Union on this in the current academic year.

2.42   The review team found that the University engages students in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience, albeit mediated largely through the Students' Union. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.43   Since the QAA Institutional Review in 2009 the University has undertaken a major review of assessment, which has resulted in a move to a standard 15-credit module framework. The Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback, introduced in 2013-14, governs all aspects of assessment and feedback. The requirements for the award of credit and degrees are specified in academic regulations. Periodic review and programme validation ensure that assessments are consistent with this framework, and Boards of Studies maintain oversight of assessments at departmental level. A new Code of Practice for the Recognition of Prior Learning has been introduced for 2015-16. The design of the approach to assessment would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.44   The review team reviewed policies and procedures related to assessment and also scrutinised paperwork relating to assessed work. In addition, the review team discussed the approach to assessment with staff and students during the visit.

2.45   The University's Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback provides a clear framework for assessment, with comprehensive guidance for its staff on assessment procedures, including helpful information about different approaches to designing assessments. The Code was revised and renamed in 2014-15 to include feedback in its title reflecting a greater emphasis on feedback across the institution. The review team noted a sustained improvement in the NSS Assessment and Feedback scores over the last five years. As part of the drive to standardise feedback, a standard pro forma for all assessments was introduced in 2014-15, which all departments use. There is increasing use of an online platform for students to submit work and receive feedback electronically; students and staff the review team met were positive about the benefits of this development.

2.46   The University has introduced a uniform requirement that all feedback on assessments is returned within three weeks. The review team heard from staff and students that in some areas feedback was taking longer, but also found evidence that the University was working to improve this and achieve a consistent performance across the institution.

2.47   The Graduate Certificate programme provides a good level of support on developing assessment literacy in staff. The Department of Higher Education also provides well-designed support to all staff on assessment approaches, including some helpful quick assessment guides. Additional guidance on using the online system was found to be informative, with interesting cases studies on developing approaches to assessment and feedback. Campus-wide events, and continuing professional development activities, provide opportunities for staff to discuss different approaches to assessment, and staff the review team met articulated effective strategies for assessment. Support is also provided for postgraduate research students involved in assessment. Approaches to assessment are given full consideration during periodic reviews and validation events.

2.48   The University operates a scheme designed to recognise and accredit prior learning. A new code of practice has been introduced in this area for 2015-16 to update

and replace the guidance in use in previous years. The numbers of students progressing through this scheme are low.

2.49   At the time of the review the University was piloting the operation of streamlined Boards of Examiners, and the review team learned that the pilot was likely to be extended across the institution. Boards of Examiners are not permitted to exercise discretion in deciding degree classifications, although, if deemed necessary, they can apply to the Senate Progression and Conferment Executive (SPACE) for permission to apply scaling. Documentary evidence demonstrates that such scaling of marks is conducted according to procedures, with robust oversight being exercised by the SPACE. A network of Academic Integrity Officers are responsible for ensuring that the regulations for academic integrity are followed correctly.

2.50   Generic grade descriptors are applied to the assessment of all taught programmes, and departments are required to provide additional supplementary information to better inform students about the marking of their assessments. While staff considered assessment information to be sufficient, more mixed views are expressed by students. Variability in marking was also reported by students. The review team concludes that the institutional framework for marking is nevertheless sound and that, in general, appropriate information is available to students, although more detail on assessment criteria would be beneficial in some areas in further developing assessment literacy in students.

2.51   The review team considers the University to operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, and that staff and students are appropriately supported. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.52   The University has arrangements for the use of external examiners, which are set out in the Code of Practice for External Examining: Taught Programmes. The Code of Practice sets out the requirements for external examiner appointments and details of their role. These arrangements also apply to associated and accredited institutions. External examiners are required to submit regular reports, using standard templates explicitly addressing key areas of the examining system. The Code of Practice stipulates formal procedures for the discussion of external examiner reports, the formulation of responses and the sharing of reports with the student body. The University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) maintains institutional oversight by receiving annual reports summarising the operation and outcomes of the scheme. The arrangements for external examining would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.53   The review team explored these arrangements by reviewing documents, scrutinising external examiner reports, and conducting discussions with staff, students and external examiners.

2.54   The Code of Practice provides a robust framework for external examining. Criteria for appointment have been recently updated by the ULTC and are consistent with the requirements of the Quality Code. Nominations received from departments are signed off at faculty level, before being checked centrally for compliance and then approved by the Senate Progression and Conferment Executive (SPACE). Annual reports on external examiners' appointments are received by the SPACE and a central register of examiners is maintained. The Code of Practice contains procedures for termination of examiners' appointments. The review team analysed documentary evidence that demonstrates that this system works consistently and in accordance with procedures. The Code of Practice is reviewed annually, with recent updates including new templates for reports, the introduction of a lead external examiner and information on the annual overview report.

2.55   External examiner reports reviewed by the review team confirm that examiners comment explicitly on standards, alignment with the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, assessment methods, marking criteria, adherence to regulations and good practice. The most recent overview report produced for the ULTC indicates high levels of satisfaction expressed by external examiners with the standards and procedures. External examiner reports are received centrally, facilitating effective levels of institutional oversight for monitoring. The review team saw evidence of the ULTC revising procedures in response to feedback from external examiners.

2.56   The University holds an induction day for all new examiners. The induction programme contains interesting case studies supporting the development of examiners to enable them to effectively carry out their duties. An evaluation of the central training and support provided indicates very positive feedback from external examiners and confirms high levels of satisfaction. Positive feedback has also been received from examiners regarding the support for the role afforded through the recently introduced online platform, which provides online access to review students' work and the feedback provided through the assessment process. Recently, the University has started sending all external examiners a copy of the annual overview report produced for the ULTC, enabling examiners to see their work in a wider context. The review team considers the institutional-level arrangements for

the induction, training and ongoing support of external examiners, including access to online marking, to be **good practice**.

2.57   The Code of Practice for External Examining: Taught Programmes requires discussion of external examiner reports at Boards of Studies meetings in the presence of student representatives. Staff met by the review team confirm this approach and note that cascading information about external examiner reports to the wider student body was the role of student representatives. Despite variation in the amount of detail recorded in the minutes, there is evidence that reports are discussed at Boards of Studies and during annual programme review. However, the review team noted limited awareness of external examiner reports among the student body. While some students are aware of the role of external examiners, citing information provided in student handbooks, very few students the team met had seen external examiner reports or had been involved in any discussion of reports, including those acting as course representatives. The review team found that engagement with students in this process is lacking and the stated approach is not working effectively. The review team **recommends** that the University makes external examiner reports widely available to students and ensure full opportunities are provided for students to engage with the formulation of responses.

2.58   The review team found that the University has a robust framework for managing external examiners. There is strong central support for external examiners in undertaking their role, although weaknesses are identified with the approach to involving students in the reporting process. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.59   The processes for annual programme review and periodic review are outlined in the internal codes of practice, as discussed under Expectation A3.1. The approach has been recently reviewed, with revisions to these codes introduced in 2014-15, including changes to roles and responsibilities, timescales, reporting formats and a revised focus on enhancement. The design of the process would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.60   The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach by analysing a range of evidence, including documents related to programme monitoring and review, as well as meeting staff and students during the review visit.

2.61   The codes of practice fully and clearly describe the approach to the annual and periodic review process and contain appendices with role guidance, checklists, templates and feedback forms, which are comprehensive and well structured. Examples of annual programme review documents from each faculty demonstrate that the process is consistent across faculties and review reports contain a reasonable level of detail to support the process, along with reflection and actions for improvement. Overview reports on annual programme review are produced by the Associate Dean Learning and Teaching within each faculty. These reports are discussed at Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees and University Learning and Teaching Committee meetings. This process is effective and ensures that appropriate oversight of programme monitoring and review is maintained.

2.62   Similarly, periodic review documents include a section for a reflective account of the programme strengths and weaknesses. An annual report is produced centrally and monitored by the Quality and Standards Subcommittee (QSS), which identifies good practice and action points. Annual reviews capture responses to these actions from the previous year.

2.63   Training is provided for internal panel members involved in periodic review. Additionally, panels include at least one external assessor for subject expertise input. Panel members submit feedback forms to give opinions on how the process can be further developed, this feedback is considered as part of the annual report produced for the QSS. Workshop presentations for training of review panel members include useful scenarios and discussion points to allow comprehensive understanding.

2.64   The review team considers the University to operate effective, regular and systematic processes for the monitoring and review of programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (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

2.65   The general principles of fairness and transparency in the operation of the regulations are set out in the introduction to the regulations. The Regulations for Academic Appeals and the Procedure for Complaints specify which students these apply to and what the arrangements are for students studying at partner institutions. Regulations are published on the Quality Enhancement and Standards web pages, with link from the recently established Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation web pages and in student handbooks. The design of the approach would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.66   The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach in meetings with staff and students, including those involved in considering appeals and complaints, and by analysing the relevant regulations, procedures and statistics.

2.67   The Procedure for Complaints is in line with the Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and appeals published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, and has recently been reviewed to shorten timescales and make them more user friendly. From 2015-16 the University is handling all complaints through a single Complaints Assessment Panel, with a permanent chair; early indications are that this is working effectively.

2.68   Students are required to raise any complaints with their personal tutor in the first instance, followed by the programme leader. Training for staff involved in complaints is available and recommended for personal tutors, but has not been compulsory to date. However, a recent audit undertaken by the University has resolved that training for personal tutors on the support role they provide should be compulsory.

2.69   The Students' Union is the main source of advice for students making a complaint or appeal. Its representatives sit on senior University committees where regulations are considered and approved, and are also members of panel hearings. The University supports the Students' Union in its role in providing an understanding of the regulations and procedures among students. Students the review team met included some who had sat on complaints panels, student representatives, and students with direct experience of raising a complaint, who were well aware of the procedures. Awareness of the procedures among other students was more limited, although the majority were confident they would know where to access information if needed.

2.70   An annual report is provided for the Senate, which gives various analyses of appeals and complaints, including other aspects of the regulations, such as disciplinary, fitness to study and fitness to practice. The annual report indicates that the number of complaints considered by the complaints panel is small. The review team noted that the figures in the annual report indicate a disproportionately higher number of appeals from minority groups, which does not appear to have been identified and discussed. The University plans to introduce quarterly reports in 2015-16 to receive, review and have an active oversight on key issues, and to consider and monitor such data.

2.71   The review team found that the University has appropriate procedures for handling appeals and complaints to ensure that these are conducted fairly, are accessible to students

and staff, and are timely in implementation. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

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

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

Findings

2.72   The University's Code of Practice for the Approval and Management of Collaborative Provision came into effect in 2015-16 and sets out the University approach. The approach includes a taxonomy of types of collaborative activity, including categorisation based on perceived risk. The types of collaborations include: validated provision at associated and accredited institutions in the UK; dual degrees; progression and articulation arrangements; study abroad/exchanges; Professional Training Year (PTY); placements; joint supervision of postgraduate research degrees; and off-campus study.

2.73   All collaborative proposals for those designated medium and high risk are submitted by faculty committees to either the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC), for taught programmes, or the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC), for consideration and approval. The Senate is then notified by the ULTC/URDC of the new collaborative arrangement. Additionally, proposals considered higher risk require strategic oversight and approval by the Executive Board and International Relations Executive Group, where appropriate. Due diligence checks are coordinated centrally and collaborative agreements are drawn up for each arrangement, which are subject to formal periodic review. A register of collaborative provision is held and maintained centrally. All areas of collaborative provision are subject to the University's codes of practice, including the annual review and periodic review procedures. Each validated programme at an accredited institution is also subject to an institutional review by the University on a five-yearly basis.

2.74   The University has a long-standing tradition of offering a PTY within academic taught programmes. The arrangements for the approval and management of these placements have been codified into a code of practice, which will come into effect in 2015-16.

2.75   The University's policies and procedures relating to the management of higher education provision with others would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.76   The review team assessed the operation and effectiveness of the approach through meetings with staff, partners involved in supporting the delivery of learning opportunities, and students. The review team considered a range of evidence relating to approval, review and management, committee oversight and legal documentation.

2.77   Following a strategic review in 2012, the University took the decision to close all but one of its UK partnerships. The remaining partner is Farnborough College of Technology (the College), an accredited institution. All other UK partnerships are in a period of teach-out. Agreements specifying the teach-out arrangements are comprehensive and set out the remaining permitted registrations and plans to safeguard the interests of students. The collaborative agreements for other partnerships are reviewed regularly, normally earlier than the period of validity.

2.78   As an accredited institution, the College has authority to approve and review its programmes. It is expected to follow the University regulations and codes of practice, although students have only recently been included as members on panels. The review

team saw evidence that the University's procedures are followed by the College in an effective way, and in discussions with its representatives it was clear that the University's expectations are well understood. Two-year degree programmes are offered at the College, although the University itself does not offer accelerated degrees. It was explained to the review team that another partner had been running two-year degrees prior to becoming an accredited institution, and the University had validated this provision. This was considered to be sufficient precedent for the College to use a similar accelerated model. The University put the two partners in contact with each other, but was not otherwise involved in consideration of the appropriate use of an accelerated model.

2.79   Dual degrees are offered with the Surrey International Institute (SII), located at the Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE). The agreement between the University and DUFE to establish SII was first made in 2006 and restated in 2011. Students spend the first two years on DUFE programmes as SII students, and then transfer for the remaining two years (FHEQ Levels 5 and 6) either to SII, and remain in China, or to the University in Guildford. The programme at SII is delivered by University of Surrey staff who are based permanently in China and follows the standard University regulations and codes of practice for taught programmes. Meetings with staff involved in managing the partnership, both in the UK and at SII in China, showed a clear understanding of the University's operational requirements and regulations. The Operations Handbook for SII is clear and comprehensive.

2.80   The same external examiners cover both the provision delivered in China and that on campus, in order to ensure the comparability of standards, and a sample of work marked at SII is moderated by staff at the University to ensure consistency. Degree results are reported on in the faculty overview reports of annual programme reviews, and analysis by the University shows students at SII performing very well. Further overview of the operation of the link takes place through the University and SII/DUFE Executive Group, which meets twice yearly, and through annual review reports. The programme handbook for SII describes the requirements for students at Levels 5 and 6, although is unclear whether it is aimed at the student doing Level 5 and 6 in China or in the UK, referring in some instances to the offices and staff at SII and in others to structures and facilities in Surrey.

2.81   A new dual degree with Sun Yat Sen University (SYSU) will commence in 2015-16. This adopts a different dual degree model in that there are no University of Surrey validated or delivered elements in China. Students are recruited by the partner to a degree programme at SYSU then apply through UCAS to transfer and complete levels 5 and 6 on one of two programmes delivered in Surrey. A programme handbook for the dual degree with SYSU has not yet been produced, as the University considers the two parts of this dual degree as discrete. Thus, students will not receive a University of Surrey programme handbook until they register as Surrey students upon transfer in 2016-17.

2.82   The University defines a dual award, and sets out key characteristics, in its code of practice, but in discussion with staff and in documentation provided there is a lack of clarity as to what this means in practice. For example, the awarding body for the SII/DUFE dual award is referred to as SII in one document and DUFE in another, and there is limited evidence of the University having anticipated the need for information from prospective and current SYSU students as to the content of the whole dual award. There is an intention to expand the range of dual degree programmes with international partners, and staff the review team met reported that this expansion could encompass a range of models, and each proposal would be judged on its merits. In view of the intended expansion, and the lack of clarity around some aspects of the current dual degrees noted above, the review team **recommends** that the University further clarify the nature and purpose of dual awards and provide a clearer framework for the future development of such awards.

2.83   The University produces certificates for UK validated programmes that record the place of study. The University was not able to show an example of the proposed certificate and transcript format for the dual degree with SYSU but reported that this would follow the same format as for the SII DUFE dual degrees. As noted in the 2012 QAA Transnational Education (TNE) report on the SII DUFE dual degree, 'neither certificates nor transcripts currently make reference to the country of study of their partner institutions'. The University consideration of this issue following the TNE report concluded that this could not be resolved under the regulations of the Chinese Government Ministry of Education. However, while the SII DUFE agreement requires that the degrees and certificates awarded by each party be identical to those awarded by each party in its own country, the separate transcript would allow the University to make clear where other credits contributing to the programme had been achieved. The award of two separate qualifications could otherwise be misleading as to the study actually undertaken. The current certificate also does not clarify that the programme leads to a dual award as opposed to a single award. The review team **recommends** that the University ensure that the transcript for dual awards includes the nature of the award and the name and location of both higher education institutions involved in the delivery of the programme of study.

2.84   A range of opportunities for placements are available to students. All undergraduate programmes, unless disallowed by a professional body, offer the opportunity for study abroad, and students can receive credit from this experience. Many programmes also offer placements, and the PTY has long been a feature of the University's provision. The arrangements for the approval and management of professional training have been codified into a code of practice for 2015-16. The review team saw examples of agreements for study visits, exchanges, placements, progression and articulation, and of the guidance given to students. The review team considers arrangements for these other forms of working with others to be working effectively, although some variability in students' preparation for placement was reported in meetings with students.

2.85   Overall, the review team found that the University has appropriate arrangements in place for the management of provision delivered by its accredited institutions, industry contacts and through its dual awards delivered overseas. However, with regard to the latter, although suitable policies and procedures are in place, there are some shortcomings in the terms of the rigour with which these clearly define the dual award, with some information being incomplete and potentially misleading. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.86   Part of the University mission is to be research led and research intensive, and the University has invested in research facilities accordingly and partnered with over 100 organisations to provide collaborative opportunities for research degrees. Entry requirements are outlined in the prospectus, and postgraduate research students are admitted in accordance with the Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy. All postgraduate research students are subject to the University regulations for research degrees, including specific regulations for practitioner doctorate degrees and degrees on the basis of published works. The management of such awards is undertaken in accordance with the internal codes of practice, which have been reviewed and developed since 2011. New research degree programmes are subject to the validation process and undergo annual review, with summary reports on the outcomes of this activity being reported by faculty to central committees. Research degrees with taught components are also subject to periodic review. External examiners are appointed to all programmes.

2.87   Oversight of such awards is exercised through the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC), which reports to the Senate, and operates two subcommittees: Admission Progression and Examination, and Researcher Training and Development. Individual oversight responsibility lies with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), and there are defined roles at University and faculty level for the oversight of provision. Further change is underway, with the approval in principle for a new Graduate School, to provide more coherent and enhanced support for research. The strategies, regulations, policies and processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.88   The review team explored the approach by reviewing relevant regulations and codes, approval and review documents, together with agreements, handbooks and other information. It met members of staff with responsibility for research at University and faculty level, and a range of supervisors and doctoral students.

2.89   The regulations, codes, handbooks and other documents currently in place provide a clear and coherent framework for the operation of research degrees. Staff the review team met demonstrated a good understanding of regulations and processes, reporting that former best practice has been embedded in the new approach. The postgraduate research regulations were revised in 2013-14 in alignment with the changes to the Quality Code, and it is evident that this included quite substantial development of cross institutional policy as regards supervisory teams, supervisor training, and the monitoring of student progress.

2.90   Similarly, the new governance structure reviewed in 2013-14 has improved the links between University and faculty, and the review team considers that the committee structure works effectively and roles are well understood. There are student members of all key decision-making committees except the Admissions, Progression and Examination Subcommittee due to the nature of its business. New postgraduate research student engagement forums have also been used at faculty level since 2014-15, with reports to the URDC. Staff and students the review team met confirm that the meetings are useful but could be more dynamic.

2.91   The Admissions Policy is a recent introduction to ensure fairness and consistency, with reports monitored by the Equality and Diversity Team. Entry requirements are clear and applicants are normally interviewed, with training for interviewers provided. There is an induction programme at each of the four registration points, with central and local events, and students the review team met considered this helpful, although they indicated that it is less useful for those who start later in the academic year. A standard postgraduate research student handbook template was introduced for 2014-15.

2.92   Training for students has been relaunched and received positively by staff and students. Training requirements are set and monitored, with interdisciplinary interaction available through regular Researcher Café sessions and a postgraduate newsletter. Students regard training and mentoring opportunities as helpful and while central training is considered too wide ranging by some, training in many departments and weekend workshops is well regarded and provides welcome flexibility.

2.93   Eligibility criteria for the appointment of supervisors are clear and training for supervisors is provided through the Researcher Development Programme. Those new to supervision must attend a two-day course, which is also available to supervisors based in other organisations, and refresher training is available. There is also a Supervisor Handbook and a Quick Guide to support staff.

2.94   A new code for postgraduate researchers who support teaching has been introduced from 2015-16 and a minimum training requirement has been specified. Students the review team met were aware that the position has been standardised, following previous departmental arrangements, and confirmed that opportunities to teach are made available to them on an open basis. All students the team met who taught had been trained, except one who had started teaching before the new code of practice was in place. There was less clarity among students on whether opportunities to undertake training for teaching for credit are available.

2.95   Progress and review arrangements are clearly defined, including standard recording pro formas, and support is available for students. All postgraduate research students met confirmed that supervision arrangements and processes are clear, that regular meetings and progress monitoring take place, and that confirmation processes are helpful. Samples of interim and annual progress reviews demonstrate that the process is generally effective in practice. Staff and students confirm that research degree assessment procedures are clear and external examiner reports confirm clarity of process and standards. Staff noted that there was still some work to be done to improve completion rates.

2.96   Staff and students gave examples of a vibrant research environment and reported that they were part of an active and well-connected research community, wherever they were based. The University monitors the research environment through programme approval and review. There is an annual student-led postgraduate research conference, research seminar programmes and a variety of other research-focused groups and events. There is also an Employers Connections Network and a Researcher-led Public Engagement Forum for external engagement opportunities.

2.97   Staff informed the review team that research programme approval and review had been tightened significantly. The team saw examples of programme approval and annual review, and found the processes to be thorough, including detailed monitoring and consideration of student feedback. Formal and objective procedures are in place for dealing with complaints and appeals, and there is an annual review of postgraduate research complaints and appeals, which is considered by the URDC.

2.98   Students are generally positive about the resources available to them, especially the library, although there are some reservations in regard to inter-disciplinary research,

where students are not equally attached to both communities. Students reported that careers advice is useful, but tends to have an undergraduate focus, and staff confirm that more is being done in areas like employer networking events. Student feedback is collected every year using Postgraduate Research Experience Survey questions: scores are positive and are monitored through annual review.

2.99   Staff confirmed that the use of partner institutions for providing research opportunities is well embedded. The principal supervisor for each student would always be based on campus. The approval and agreement processes for collaborative agreements has been tightened and due diligence checks are undertaken before a formal agreement is established with the partner to support both supervisor and supervisee. The review team found that detailed agreements are in place, and that University regulations and processes are followed.

2.100   The review team found that the University provides research degrees in an environment that provides secure academic standards for research and for learning. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.101   In determining its judgement on the quality of student learning opportunities at the University, the review team considered the findings against the criteria as outlined in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.102   All Expectations in this area are met and the level of risk is considered low in all cases with the exception of Expectation B10, where the review team considers there to be a moderate risk to the quality of learning opportunities.

2.103   The arrangements for ensuring the quality of student learning opportunities are generally sound, and the review team noted a number of features of good practice with regards to the support provided to students and external examiners. Specifically, the University has developed tailored academic support for different groups of students through the Senate Progression and Conferment Executive, and through initiatives aimed at supporting students on the borderlines of academic performance. Similarly, the University has adopted a proactive approach to improving student progression across the University through a coordinated range of activities at central and faculty levels. University-wide arrangements for the induction and ongoing support of external examiners are also considered to make a positive contribution to the general effectiveness of the external examining role at the University.

2.104   The review team makes two recommendations for action in the areas of managing provision with others, regarding the clarity of arrangements for the development and management of dual awards and the need to ensure that the certificated outcomes of such awards are unambiguous in stating the nature of the award and locations of study. The team considers the University's approach to both sharing, and promoting engagement with, external examiner reports among students to be not operating effectively, and recommends that reports be made more widely available and that full opportunities for discussion be provided to achieve consistency in the consideration of external examiner reports across the University.

2.105   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the University **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 University website contains information about its mission, values and overall strategy; the quality assurance framework; and programme information relevant to prospective and current students. Programme information is also provided through a hard copy prospectus. Information to current students is provided through online programme handbooks, produced to an standard template, and through module information available through a module catalogue on the virtual learning environment (VLE), SurreyLearn. There is a defined process for approving publicity material, which requires that the accuracy of the prospectus, website and other publicity materials are signed off by a range of internal stakeholders. Completing postgraduates receive transcripts of their studies and undergraduates are issued with an electronic Higher Education Achievement Records. The approach to the provision of information would enable the Expectation to be met.

3.2	The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach in meetings with staff and students, consideration of a variety of handbooks, and exploration of online information through the external website and VLE.

3.3	The prospectus web pages are a major source of information, providing information on programme structure and content; outlining entry requirements and admissions information; and providing an overview of learning resources, accommodation, facilities, the Students' Union, and opportunities for exchanges and professional training. For prospective postgraduate research students, the information covers the research areas of the school/department and details of funding opportunities. Students confirm that the information provided prior to applying is accurate, and students the review team met were generally satisfied with the level of detail available. The student submission, which was submitted as evidence for this review, reported that prospective students would benefit from more detailed module descriptions in the prospectus beyond module titles, although students at the visit indicated that this information is available to applicants, albeit not easily accessible.

3.4	The website includes specific information for international students, including living and studying in the UK and the availability of additional support. Information for other types of applicants, such as widening participation and non-traditional students, is not so easily accessible. For example, information regarding the accreditation of prior experience, the In2Surrey scheme and disability are not highly visible on the webpages, and the Admissions Policy only includes references to the latter.

3.5	Programme handbooks are available to all students that include programme specifications, signpost students to University regulations and contain information on how the student voice is heard. With the exception of some student representatives, student awareness of the Student Charter contained within programme handbooks was limited. Overall, current students met by the review team were satisfied with the accessibility and information available, and noted ongoing improvements to the VLE.

3.6   Quality assurance information is made available to staff, students and external stakeholders through publication of the codes of practice on the University website. These documents provide a coherent and accessible quality assurance framework, and staff confirmed that the suite of codes were well embedded and understood.

3.7   The review team found that the University produces information that is fit for purpose, reasonably accessible, and trustworthy. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.8   In determining its judgement on the quality of information about learning opportunities at the University the review team considered the findings against the criteria outlined in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.9   The review team considers that processes for the provision of information to a range of stakeholders are sound and implemented appropriately. Information produced is fit for purpose, trustworthy and, in general, easily accessible.

3.10   The review team concludes that the quality of information about learning opportunities at the University **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 University has a range of strategies, support structures and events that reflect its approach to enhancement. The University Strategy 2012-17, the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy all contain a commitment to enhancing the student experience. Responsibility for overseeing enhancement lies with the University Learning and Teaching Committee, which is informed by the work of its subcommittees and the faculties. A range of support departments across the University support work in the area of enhancement, including the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning, the Researcher Development Programme, and the Student Personalised Learning and Support Hub. The University also has regular events supporting enhancement-related activities, including the annual Excellence in Teaching Symposium, Surrey ExciTeS conference; Learning and Teaching Weeks; and the postgraduate research conference. This approach provides a structure that would enable the Expectation to be met.

4.2   The review team reviewed a range of documents, reports and event programmes and discussed the University's approach to enhancement with staff and students.

4.3   The University has undergone a significant number of changes in recent years, including the Operational Review, the move to a new standard 15-credit framework, a reduction in the number of faculties, and the introduction of a number of new institutional codes of practice covering the management of quality and standards. Many of these changes had been internally referenced, with an emphasis on improving processes, and funds have been made available to support new initiatives. In considering the volume of change and broad student satisfaction on implementation, the University has been effective at managing change.

4.4   A range of quality assurance processes provide opportunities for the University to gather comments and feedback for enhancement. For example, members of validation panels for new programmes are asked to provide feedback on the process, and external examiners are asked to explicitly identify anything they consider good practice. These provide a systematic source of information for the University to consider, and the Directorate of Quality, Enhancement and Standards produce a range of annual reports with recommendations for improving processes. Senior staff attend Students' Union-run course representative assemblies four times a year, which enables them to remain informed about the views of course representatives.

4.5   The review team found a number of academic support activities with a strong focus on the enhancement of the student experience. This includes the Library and Learning Support Services for students, and Technology Enhanced Learning, which provides an effective programme of 'show and TEL' support events for academic staff. The University also has a regular programme of annual events to raise awareness of learning and teaching matters and student support. These enhancement-focused events include Surrey ExciTeS. Staff the review team met reported that this provided a good opportunity to discuss different approaches, share best practice and develop new approaches to supporting students. Learning and Teaching Weeks, hosted by the Department of Higher Education, provide a

week of events designed to enable teaching staff to share good academic practice from across the University.

4.6   As part of its enhancement related activity the University identified the need to establish a graduate school, with the aim of building a cohesive and coherent community of doctoral and early career researchers, while also raising the profile of the training and support provided to doctoral candidates. At the time of the review the proposal had been approved by the Executive Board and was being developed further. The review team considers the development of a graduate school to have the potential to enhance the support offered to the University's postgraduate research student community.

4.7   The University has begun a process to review and refresh its strategy for quality enhancement, with a view to making it more accessible and meaningful for the whole University community. The review team learned that this was to make the University's approach to enhancement more transparent so that more staff can engage in enhancement related activities; work in this area will be taken forward in 2015-16.

4.8   The University has undertaken a wide-ranging programme of work, which demonstrates that deliberate steps are taking to improve the quality of student learning opportunities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.9   In determining its judgement on the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the University, the review team considered the findings against the criteria as outlined in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.10   The review team concludes that the University has undertaken a wide-ranging programme of work to enhance the student experience and provides a clear structure for this to take place, including effective lines of reporting and clear responsibilities. The central support infrastructure has been significantly developed over recent years and has taken a greater role in driving the enhancement process, which provides a sound basis for the University to continue in its enhancement of student learning opportunities.

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

5   Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   The University has a long-standing track record in the successful employment of its graduates, as evidenced by its data from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey, and was a pioneer in the development of sandwich programmes.

5.2   Placements, and the Professional Training Year, remain an important part of the University approach to student employability, but the University recognises that it cannot afford to be complacent in a competitive environment. It has, therefore, undertaken a comprehensive review of professional training, with a view to initiating a strategic change in the management and operation of professional training, careers and employability.

5.3   A new post of Director of Employability was created to give strategic leadership, bringing together careers, employability and professional training. A new Professional Training, Careers and Employability Strategy has been developed.

5.4   The Careers and Employability Service supports students in their career journey from the moment they arrive at the University to graduation and beyond. The activities of the Service are wide ranging. The Service adopts a holistic approach to responding to student needs, blending traditional one-to-one support with an intensive programme of careers events, and a series of subject-specific employability days and career development workshops. The service offered to students includes: careers information; careers guidance (online and face to face); employer engagement through careers fairs; information sessions; and skills workshops.

5.5   The Code of Practice for the Design and Approval of New Programmes requires the submission document for a programme validation to include details of how personal development planning has been embedded into the programmes, with particular reference to research, employability, transferable information literacy and communication skills.

5.6   While the number of students on placement has dropped from its peak of 1,012 students in 2012-13, to 2014-15 in 791, survey data shows that 98 per cent of students who go on placement are very satisfied with their experience, and feel that it enhances their employment prospects. Meetings with students confirmed that the Professional Training Year and employability were, in a number of cases, a significant factor in choosing to study at the University, and in some instances students attend placement preparatory sessions even if not going on the placement themselves, in order to develop their skills.

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 30 to 33 of the Higher Education Review handbook.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning

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

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

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

Framework
A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications
A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (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.

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

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

Reference points
Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Subject Benchmark Statement
A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

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

Threshold academic standard
The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

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

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