

# Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students

Inter-Ed UK t/a The City College

## Review Report

December 2019



Working as the Designated Quality Body for England

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## Summary of findings and reasons

Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
S1	The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	Met	High	<p>For the College's Pearson provision from the evidence seen, the review team consider that the standards set for the College's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The review team also consider that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The review team consider that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by the College's students are expected to be line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. Based on this information the review team also consider that the College's academic regulations and policies will ensure that these standards are maintained. The review team consider that staff fully understand the College's approach to maintaining these standards and that the evidence seen demonstrates they are committed to implementing this approach.</p> <p>For the College's Licentiate in Acupuncture from the evidence provided, the review team consider that the standards the College has set are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The review team also consider that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are</p>

				<p>consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are set and maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The review team consider that the standards that will be achieved by the College's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The review team consider that the evidence seen demonstrates that the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that these standards are maintained. The review team consider that staff fully understand the provider's approach to maintaining these standards and are committed to implementing this approach. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>
S2	The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	High	<p>For the College's Pearson provision based on the evidence presented to them, the team determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the College's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The review team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately. Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.</p>

				For the College's Licentiate in Acupuncture the standards the College has set beyond the threshold are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the College's academic regulations and policies ensure that such standards are set appropriately. Therefore the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications should have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met
S3	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	Met	High	The review team conclude that the College has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of the awards it will deliver on behalf of its awarding organisations are credible and secure. This is because the College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies for working with Pearson to ensure the standards of their awards are credible and secure. Staff fully understand their responsibilities towards the awarding organisations and following their regulations as well as using external examiners with regard to maintaining academic standards. The review team conclude, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High	<p>The College has clear and comprehensive regulations and/or policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards through its regulatory framework which meets the requirements of its awarding and accrediting bodies. Records of course approval and review confirm that external expertise is used according to the College's regulations. The regulatory framework includes detailed arrangements for the assessment of students against the prescribed standards, and the College's internal verification procedures are robust. Assessed student work examined by the team confirms assessment and classification are carried out in line with the College's and course's requirements. The framework also contains arrangements for the use of external academic expertise in the periodic review of programmes and for the use of external examiners to verify the standards being achieved by the students. Reports from external examiners form a central element of the College's process of programme annual monitoring and they confirm that the College's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. Responses to external examiner reports confirm that the College gives that expertise due consideration. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p>
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Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High	<p>The review team concludes that the College has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. The College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive. Information given to applicants is, with the exception of the practice component of the Licentiate in Acupuncture, transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose. The review team note that the Licentiate in Acupuncture course uses a pre-interview process which is not completely transparent and provides opaque information regarding the consent required for the practice component of the course because this information is only partially given to potential applicants at the pre-application stage. Admissions requirements for the courses sampled reflect the College's overall regulations and/or policy. Reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled and, although admissions records contained omissions in that two out of the three Licentiate in Acupuncture records sampled did not contain a personal statement, this did not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interests of students. The HND programmes have a clear policy for the recruitment and admission of students, entry requirements are consistent with the College's policy, and admissions records demonstrate that the College's policies are implemented in practice. The Policy is implemented by staff who understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained. The review team concludes, therefore, that, on balance, this Core practice is met.</p>
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Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	<p>The review team concludes that the College designs and delivers high-quality courses. The College has in place credible, robust and evidence-based plans and processes for designing and delivering high-quality courses through its Learning and Teaching Policy and Procedure, the Internal Programme Approval Procedure, and the Internal Verification Policy. Approved course documentation, particularly programme specifications, indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. External examiners and third parties confirm that the courses concerned are of a high quality. Staff are able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of the College and demonstrate how the provision meets that definition through the team's observations of teaching and learning which show clarity of objectives, good planning and organisation, a sound method or approach, good delivery, appropriate content, effective use of resources and student engagement. Feedback from students confirms that they regard their courses as being of high quality. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	<p>The College has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Through its staffing structure, Learning and Teaching Policy, Staff Development Policy and Continuing Professional Development the College has evidenced that it has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. Staff CVs and observations of teaching and learning indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Staff are</p>



				supported by ongoing staff engagement with CPD. Internal and external feedback from students on the quality of their learning experience evidence that students tend to agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	The review team concludes that the College has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The review team found that, through the implementation of the College's Strategic Development Plan and consideration of resourcing through its deliberative committee structure, the College's plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes to students. The team's own assessment of the facilities and learning resources determined that the College provides a high-quality learning experience with sufficient capacity for current and planned student numbers. Staff understand their roles and are appropriately skilled and supported. The accrediting body, BAAB, confirms that facilities and learning resources are sufficient and appropriate, and students tend to regard facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate to facilitate a high-quality academic experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	The review team concludes that the College actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because the College has a clear and effective approach to engaging students as set out in the Student Engagement Policy. Students in meetings report that they feel engaged in the quality of their learning experience and are able to provide feedback. This is confirmed through external surveys where students express satisfaction with student engagement. Low completion rates for internal surveys question the efficacy of this mechanism for collecting student feedback. This has been acknowledged by senior staff who confirm that action is being taken to address this issue. The team saw evidence of changes made to provision based on student feedback. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q6	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	High	The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals that are accessible to all students. This is because the College's procedures for handling complaints are definitive, fair and transparent and deliver timely outcomes. The procedures are accessible to students in programme handbooks, on the VLE and on the College website. Students do not raise any serious concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures or their application. Complaints reviewed by the team had been dealt with according to the College procedure and regulations including in relation to internal and external appeals referral and adherence to specified timescales. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

Q8	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.	Met	High	<p>When working in partnership with other organisations, the College has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. The College works effectively with its awarding and accrediting partners through thorough and well thought out policies and procedures and a good working relationship between the College and its partners through credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring a high-quality academic experience and the awarding and accrediting partners are meeting their responsibilities. The team's analysis of the evidence demonstrates that although the College's work with workplace partners forms only a small proportion of its provision, care is taken to assure the quality of workplace learning opportunities. Relationships with workplace providers are governed by a comprehensive Work Placement and Experience Policy and captured in a clear memorandum of understanding. The College approves and retains firm oversight of each placement, briefing supervisors and mentors before placements begin, and subsequently maintaining regular engagement with both employers and students throughout the placement. The College has clear and comprehensive policies in place for the management of partnerships with other organisations, to ensure that the academic experience is high quality. Staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body. External examiners consider courses delivered in partnership to be of high quality, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements. Students and employers confirm the value of the placement experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p>
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Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	<p>The College supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The College value of 'where students come first' is transparent in the academic and pastoral support provided to students. This is because the College has a range of academic and welfare policies that are credible, robust and evidence-based for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The Pastoral Care Policy is supported by a designated welfare officer with responsibility for routine monitoring and support of students with additional requirements. Students who have accessed this support have found it helpful. However, the College does not routinely map student outcome and academic attainment or retention data against protected characteristics, with the exception of ethnicity. This means that the processes for monitoring and supporting all students to achieve successful and professional outcomes are not fully robust and credible. Despite this, students tend to agree that they are adequately supported by the College, and this is consistent with external survey results and supported by a robust internal verification and monitoring process. Staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p>
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## About this report

This is a report detailing the outcomes of the Quality and Standards Review for providers applying to register with the Office for Students (OfS), conducted by QAA in December 2019 for Inter-Ed UK t/a The City College.

A Quality and Standards Review (QSR) is a method of review QAA uses to provide OfS with evidence about whether new providers applying to be on the OfS Register meet the Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), based on evidence reviewed by expert assessors. This report is structured to outline the review team's decisions about the providers' ability to meet the Core practices through detailing the key pieces of evidence scrutinised and linking that evidence to the judgements made.

The team for this review was:

Name: Professor Ian Robinson  
Institution: University of Lincoln  
Role in review team: Institutional reviewer

Name: Dr Graham Holden  
Institution: Sheffield Hallam  
Role in review team: Subject specialist Business and Management

Name: Dr Adele Pacini  
Institution: The Open University  
Role in review team: Subject specialist Health and Social Care

The QAA Officer for the review was Kevin Kendall.

The size and composition of this review team is in line with published guidance and, as such, is comprised of experts with significant experience and expertise across the higher education sector. The team included members with experience of a similar provider to the institution, knowledge of the academic awards offered and included academics with expertise in subject areas relevant to the provider's provision. Collectively, the team had experience of the management and delivery of higher education programmes from academic and professional services perspectives, included members with regulatory and investigative experience, and had at least one member able to represent the interests of students. The team included at least one senior academic leader qualified to doctoral level. Details of team members were shared with the provider prior to the review to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

## About The City College

The City College was founded in 1979 as City College of Higher Education. It moved to the current premises in 1995.

The academic structure comprises the Board of Directors, the Board of Governors, the Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team. Operational committees include the Student Staff Liaison Committees, the Assessment Boards and the Programme Teams.

The College has agreements with employers who provide placements for the Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and the Diploma in Education and Training.

Senior staff at the College include the Managing Director, Principal and Director of Student Records. Programme leaders for each of the main subject areas report directly to them.

### **Higher education courses on offer**

- HNC in Business (23)
- HND in Business and Management (40)
- HNC in Healthcare Practice (2)
- HNC in Social and Community Work (6)
- HNC in International Tourism (6)
- HNC in Hospitality Management (15)
- HND in Health and Social Care (27)
- HND in Hospitality Management (14)
- HND in Travel and Tourism Management (5)
- Licentiate in Acupuncture (32)
- Diploma in Education and Training (48).

Figures in brackets refer to the number of students on the programme, of which there are 218 in total. All students are full-time with the exception of four part-time students on the Diploma in Education and Training (DET).

These qualifications are all awarded by Pearson, with the exception of the Licentiate in Acupuncture which is accredited by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) and awarded by The City College.

## **The City College and Pearson Education Ltd: Responsibilities**

The City College offers Higher National programmes in the scope of this review that lead to an award from Pearson Education Ltd (Pearson).

Pearson is an awarding organisation that has its qualifications, examinations and assessments regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). As an awarding organisation, Pearson creates Ofqual-regulated curricula (which include detailed learning outcomes) as well as programme specifications and handbooks. Pearson also issues certificates to students, when providers submit evidence that its students have completed the relevant programme of study, to the standard required.

Pearson devolves responsibility for the recruitment, teaching, support and assessment of students to providers and uses information gained from the initial approval and subsequent external examiner visits to determine if the relevant sector-recognised standards continue to be met. The provider should also have in place processes and procedures to ensure that the learning materials and the learning and teaching strategy are regularly reviewed and modified, as appropriate, to ensure their continued relevance and validity.

As set out in BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance (2018-19), providers are specifically responsible for:

- preparing for external examiner visits and seriously considering and acting upon recommendations which are outcomes of visits
- designing effective learning materials and a learning and teaching strategy that meets the learning outcomes of the Higher Nationals

- putting in place processes and procedures to ensure that the learning materials and the learning and teaching strategy are regularly reviewed and modified, as appropriate, to ensure their continued relevance and validity
- providing definitive programme information relating to the Higher Nationals as delivered at their institution, including a tailored programme specification
- operational responsibility for ensuring that students have appropriate opportunities to show they have achieved the intended learning outcomes and grading descriptors (where appropriate). This includes responsibility for setting assessments in direct compliance with Pearson requirements
- first marking of students' work
- giving feedback to students on their work
- the admission of students, including promoting and marketing the programme; setting admissions criteria; selecting applicants; making offers and enrolment, induction and orientation of new students; and making student registrations in a timely fashion
- widening access so that all students have an equal opportunity to access their qualifications and assessments
- the appointment of teaching staff and ensuring they have the right skills and experience to deliver a high-quality programme
- delivery of the programme, including provision of learning resources and all aspects of learning and teaching strategy. Appointment of teaching staff. Strategic oversight of the identification and provision of learning resources to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, including provision for students with additional learning needs
- developing, implementing and facilitating arrangements and processes that ensure the engagement of students, individually and collectively, in the enhancement and assurance of the educational experience
- ensuring appropriate processes are in place to routinely monitor and periodically review the programme as delivered by them and to keep under constant review all aspects of standards management, quality assurance and day-to-day delivery of the programme
- implementation of a fair and accessible complaints procedure for the informal, and where appropriate formal, investigation and determination of a student complaint.

Prior to delivery, any provider must be approved by Pearson to deliver the relevant qualifications. Once approved, providers must register students with Pearson and then be subject to annual visits from Pearson-appointed external examiners to determine if the delivery of the qualifications is in line with the published specifications. Providers are also required to submit provider-wide evidence of review of their higher education Pearson provision annually and some providers are subject to annual academic management review (AMR) visits.

As such, Pearson does not have direct relationships with the students of a provider but does provide online support materials (<https://hnglobal.highernationals.com>). Pearson also accepts complaints or academic appeals from students if the students do not feel that these issues have been dealt with appropriately by the provider.

## How the review was conducted

The review was conducted according to the process set out in [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

When undertaking a QSR, all 13 of the Core practices are considered by the review team. However, for this review it was clear that the College does not offer a research degree programme. Therefore, the review team did not consider Q7 (where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments).

To form its judgements about the College's ability to meet the Core practices, the review team considered a range of evidence that was submitted prior to the review visit and evidence gathered at the review visit itself. To ensure that the review team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews, the team used Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers to construct this report and detail the key pieces of evidence seen. Annex 4 expects that review teams will sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this review, the review team sampled the following areas for evidence for the reasons given below:

- The review team examined a representative sample of seven sets of approved course documentation from the 11 programmes offered by the College; to test that specified threshold standards for courses sampled are consistent with relevant national qualifications frameworks; to test that specified standards beyond the threshold for courses sampled are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers; to assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the courses sampled; to test whether admissions requirements for courses sampled reflect the College's overall regulations and/or policy and to test that all elements of the courses sampled are high quality and that the teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.
- The review team randomly sampled nine admission records from three courses, three from each course, to assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled. These were the acupuncture, September 2019 cohort, the hospitality management Level 5 HND May 2018 cohort and the travel and tourism management, January 2019, cohort.
- The review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care, Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Acupuncture programme. The team also looked at the external report resulting from Pearson's annual monitoring process. The sample covered all programmes from which student assessed work was scrutinised. This was to check that external examiners confirm that threshold standards are consistent with national qualifications frameworks, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards have been met; to check that external examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold for courses sampled are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met; to test whether external examiners consider that standards are credible and secure, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements; to interrogate the use of external examiners and that the College considers and respond to externals' reports regarding standards appropriately; to identify externals' views about reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes; to identify external examiners' views about the quality of the courses sampled and to test that external examiners consider courses delivered in partnership to be of high quality, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements.



- The review team examined a random and representative sample of assessed student work across all programmes and levels. The samples were taken from four programmes, comprising 96 pieces of assessed work and feedback drawn from 20 modules. The sample included work from Levels 4, 5 and 6 embracing a range of assessment methods, including written and practical examinations, case studies, role-playing scenarios, dissertations, project reports, presentations, reflective essays and work placement coursework portfolios. Ensuring that the only Level 6 programme (acupuncture) and a programme which had placement learning was included. The sample included the full range of student marks. A random sample of two students' assessed placement portfolios were selected from HND Health and Social Care, one of the two programmes in which work placements contributes to credit. Internal verification and external examining records were also scrutinised for this programme. This was to test that students' assessed work reflects the relevant threshold standards; to test that marks and awards given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers; to test that standards of awards are credible and secure, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements and to test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback.
- The review team met a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years to assess whether students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold; to identify how students regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes; to assess students' views about the admissions process; to consider students' views about the quality of the courses sampled; to assess whether students consider that the College has sufficient staff and that those staff are appropriately qualified and skilled; to consider students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services; to assess whether students consider they are engaged in the quality of their educational experience; to identify students' views about the clarity and accessibility of the College's complaints and appeals procedures; to evaluate students' views about the quality of courses delivered in partnership; to assess students' views about student support mechanisms and to assess whether students who have made particular use of student support services regard those services as accessible and effective.
- The review team observed five teaching sessions at Levels 4, 5 and 6, including the Higher National programmes, acupuncture programme and the Diploma in Education and Training programme, to test whether course delivery is high quality and to test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience.
- The team examined a range of surveys which included the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Pearson External Centre Survey. The team also sampled three student evaluation forms from three programmes at random as a comparison with the external surveys (nine in total), the Year 1 Acupuncture (three students), the business management course (Unit 3, Human Resource Management and Unit 13 Managing Human Resources). Student views were also apparent in the minutes of programme team, Academic Board meetings and records of Staff Student Liaison Committee minutes. This was to identify students' views about the quality of the courses sampled; to ascertain students' views about sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff; to identify students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services; to establish students' views about student engagement in the quality of their educational experience; to assess students' views about the quality of courses delivered in partnership and to identify students' views about student support mechanisms.

- The review team examined a representative sample of 21 CVs and five job descriptions for teaching and professional support staff to assess whether the staff sampled are appropriately qualified and skilled to perform their roles effectively and to assess that the staff sampled were recruited according to the College's policies and procedures.
- The team examined all complaints and appeals received by the College over the last three years. There were two complaints and one appeal. Consequently, the review team reviewed both complaints from the initial student complaint through to completion of proceedings, and the appeal to test that complaints and appeals sampled were dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

## Explanation of findings

### S1 The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks

1 To meet this Core practice a provider must ensure that threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The threshold standards for its qualifications must be articulated clearly and must be met, or exceeded, through the delivery of the qualification and the assessment of students.

2 The sector-recognised standards that are used in relation to this Core practice are those that apply in England, as defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. That is, those set out in Table 1, in paragraphs 4.10, 4.12, 4.15, 4.17, 4.18, in paragraphs 6.13-6.18 and in the Table in Annex C, in the version of [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ) published in October 2014. These sector-recognised standards represent the threshold academic standards for each level of the FHEQ and the minimum volumes of credit typically associated with qualifications at each level.

3 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### The evidence the team considered

4 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Licentiate in Acupuncture Programme Specification
- b City College of Acupuncture specification and programme regulations (Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture 1)
- c FHEQ-Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture (SETA) mapping
- d HND Business (Management) Programme Handbook Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Oct 19
- e HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- f HND Health Care Practice Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- g HND International Travel and Tourism Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- h HND Social and Community Work Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- i HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)
- j HND Health and Social Care (Management) Programme Handbook QCF
- k HND Travel and Tourism Programme Handbook QCF
- l Introduction (SER) and submission
- m HND Programmes External Examiner Reports

n	External Examiner Report Part A and B (example)
o	Acupuncture External Examiner Reports 2017, 2018, 2019
p	Internal Verification Policy
q	Assessment Policy
r	Standardisation Meeting Minutes
s	Student Assessed Work (SAS) - Sampling - Acupuncture
t	Student Assessed Work (SAS) - Pearson Programmes
u	Annual Programme Monitoring Review (APMR) Guidance
v	Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2016-17 and 2017-18
w	Annual Programme Monitoring Reports
x	City College Annual Monitoring Report Executive Summary 2018
y	Academic Board minutes
z	Committee Terms of Reference
aa	Acupuncture Programme Team Meeting minutes
bb	HND Programme Team Meeting minutes
cc	Lesson observations
dd	Academic Management Report (AMR) by Pearson (example)
ee	BTEC Annual Student Survey 2018 and 2019
ff	Acupuncture unit evaluations
gg	BAAB Accreditation Resolution 2016
hh	BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form/Report
ii	Student Submission
jj	Meeting with Senior Staff
kk	Meeting with Students
ll	Meeting with Academic and Professional Support Staff How any samples of evidence were constructed

5 To test that specified threshold standards for courses sampled are consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks, the review team examined a representative sample of seven sets of approved course documentation from the 11 programmes offered by the College.

6 To check that external examiners confirm threshold standards are consistent with national qualifications frameworks, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those sector-recognised standards have been met, the review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Licentiate in Acupuncture.

7 To test that students' assessed work reflects the relevant threshold standards, the review team examined a random and representative sample of assessed student work across all programmes and levels. The samples were taken from four programmes, comprising 96 pieces of assessed work and feedback drawn from 20 modules. The sample included work from Levels 4, 5 and 6 embracing a range of assessment methods, including written and practical examinations, case studies, role-playing scenarios, dissertations, project reports, presentations, reflective essays and work placement coursework portfolios, ensuring that the only Level 6 programme (acupuncture) and a programme which had placement learning was included. The sample included the full range of student marks.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

8 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to

ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

9 To identify the College's approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification as the underlying basis for the standards of awards, the team examined academic policies and regulations, including the City College of Acupuncture (CCA) specification and regulations, Internal Verification Policy, Assessment Policy, Standardisation Meeting minutes (example) and BTEC external examiners reports.

10 To interrogate the robustness and credibility of the College's plans for ensuring threshold standards, the team examined plans for maintaining sector-recognised standards through the annual programme monitoring process; mechanisms for the oversight of these processes through the committee structure; minutes of Academic Board and minutes of Programme Team meetings.

11 To identify how accrediting bodies regard threshold standards and award procedures, the team examined external annual accreditation reports.

12 To test that staff understand and apply the College's approach to maintaining threshold standards, the team held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff involved in assessment.

### **What the evidence shows**

13 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

14 The College delivers two types of qualification. Higher National qualifications designed by Pearson, for which Pearson retains responsibility for setting and maintaining standards, and an acupuncture qualification (Licentiate in Acupuncture) which is designed and awarded by the College under accreditation by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB). Sampled programme specifications for HND provision evidence that the College produces detailed programme and assessment specifications, which are published in the Programme Handbooks.

15 The College has overall responsibility for setting and maintaining standards for its Acupuncture programme, and for ensuring that clinical and ethical practices align with external requirements. The Licentiate in Acupuncture is mapped to the appropriate levels of the FHEQ by the BAAB. Staff select units aligned to the Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture, and design and develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies, as well as learning materials. The programme specification and associated assessment briefs, and assessment criteria are at the appropriate level of the FHEQ. The specified sector-recognised standards for all the courses sampled are therefore consistent with relevant national qualifications frameworks.

16 The College's approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation meets the requirements of Pearson as evidenced by the BTEC external examiners' reports, and BAAB as evidenced by the acupuncture external examiners' reports. The College has in place an Assessment Policy that sets out principles and processes which in turn are supported by policies and processes to ensure that sector-recognised standards are met. These include internal verification and standardisation and moderation meetings which establish the standards that must be met in marking and assessment, and which ensure that assessment decisions are consistent and fair, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant sector-recognised standards are met.

17 For the Higher National qualifications, the College follows the processes and guidance for assessment provided by Pearson to ensure that the sector-recognised standards are consistent with the relevant national qualification frameworks. The College's Academic Board has overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to Pearson's policies and regulations. Annual monitoring processes are in place for all programmes. Annual monitoring reports confirm that plans for maintaining standards are credible and effective. Academic Board minutes, annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports confirm the effective operation of policies and processes for the monitoring of sector-recognised standards.

18 The City College Acupuncture course is accredited by BAAB and undergoes annual monitoring by BAAB and full re-accreditation every five years. The College achieved full accreditation for the Acupuncture programme from BAAB in 2016. Outcomes of the annual monitoring of programmes from BAAB evidence that the Acupuncture programme has been in good academic standing since its accreditation in 2016. This is also evidenced by the external examiner reports for this programme. External examiner reports confirm for all programmes that sector-recognised standards are met and identify areas for improvement, such as variability in grading, which is noted to have been addressed in the subsequent report.

19 Satisfactory operation of these processes for Higher National programmes is monitored by Pearson and is confirmed for 2018-19. The efficacy of these processes is also confirmed by verification reports and reports from external examiners. External examiner reports for BTEC and Acupuncture confirm that sector-recognised standards are met, and that these standards are consistent with national qualifications frameworks, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met.

20 A representative from BAAB attended the academic and professional support staff meeting and confirmed that BAAB's standards are mapped to the FHEQ. The BAAB representative further explained that its accreditation and annual monitoring processes ensure that programmes comply with the sector-recognised standards. External monitoring of BTEC provision and BAAB accreditation reports confirms that the sector-recognised standards described in definitive course documentation are consistent with relevant national qualifications framework.

21 Sampling of student assessed work for all programmes confirms that student work is of a standard commensurate with the appropriate level of the FHEQ. Sampled work for acupuncture and Higher National programmes provides evidence of internal verification. Consideration of external examiner reports for BTEC and Acupuncture confirm that standards are met. The review team concludes, therefore, that assessed student work reflects the relevant academic standards and demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant sector-recognised standards have been met.

22 In meetings, senior academic and professional support staff were able to articulate an accurate understanding and implementation of the College's approach to maintaining sector-recognised standards. Feedback from senior and academic and professional support staff confirms that they understand and apply the College's approach to setting and maintaining standards for the one BAAB programme and maintaining standards for Pearson provision.

## **Conclusions**

23 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account

of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

24 For the College's Pearson provision, from the evidence seen, the review team considers that the standards set for the College's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. The review team also considers that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.

25 The review team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by the College's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. Based on this information the review team also considers that the College's academic regulations and policies will ensure that these standards are maintained. The review team considers that staff fully understand the College's approach to maintaining these standards and that the evidence seen demonstrates that they are committed to implementing this approach.

26 For the College's Licentiate in Acupuncture, from the evidence provided, the review team considers that the standards the College has set are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. The review team also considers that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are set and maintained appropriately.

27 The review team considers that the standards that will be achieved by the College's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. The review team considers that the evidence seen demonstrates that the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that these standards are maintained. The review team considers that staff fully understand the College's approach to maintaining these standards and are committed to implementing this approach. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.

28 The College ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks. This is because the College has in place governance and annual monitoring arrangements that oversee procedures for maintaining threshold standards that are credible and fully understood by staff. The College has a comprehensive range of academic policies that support the maintenance of academic standards at the relevant threshold level. External monitoring of BTEC provision and BAAB accreditation reports confirm that the threshold standards described in definitive course documentation are consistent with relevant national qualifications framework. External examiner reports for all programmes confirm that threshold standards are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' framework, and credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards have been met. Assessed student work demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant threshold standards have been met. On meeting staff, they demonstrated understanding and application of the College's approach to maintaining standards.

29 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **S2 The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers**

31 This Core practice expects that the provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

32 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

33 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a City College of Acupuncture specification and programme regulations (Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture 1)
- b FHEQ-SETA mapping
- c Assessment Policy
- d Internal Verification Policy
- e Standardisation Meeting Minutes 27 Sept 2019
- f Introduction and submission
- g Academic Board Terms of Reference
- h Academic Board minutes
- i Annual Programme Monitoring Report Guidance
- j Annual Programme Monitoring Reports
- k External Examiner Report Part A and B (example)
- l Acupuncture External Examiner Report 2017, 2018, 2019
- m HND External Examiner Reports
- n Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- o Academic Conduct and Practice (malpractice) procedure
- p Staff Academic Malpractice Policy
- q Turnitin guidance
- r Suspected Case of Academic Malpractice Referral Form EXEMPLAR
- s Tell-tale signs of Suspected Case of Academic Malpractice
- t Details of student academic misconduct
- u Academic Malpractice examples
- v HND Business (Management) Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- w HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- x HND Health Care Practice Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- y HND International Travel and Tourism Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- z HND Social and Community Work Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19



aa	HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook QCF
bb	HND Health and Social Care (Management) Programme Handbook QCF
cc	HND Travel and Tourism Programme Handbook QCF
dd	Acupuncture Programme Spec
ee	Student Assessed Work - Samples - Acupuncture
ff	Student Assessed Work - Samples - Pearson programmes
gg	Internal Programme Approval Procedure
hh	Acupuncture Programme Team Meeting minutes
ii	Higher National Programme Team Meeting Minutes
jj	Lesson observations
kk	Unit 7 Business Law Pearson Checking Service report Oct 19 (example)
ll	Acupuncture unit evaluations
mm	BTEC Annual Student Survey 2018 and 2019
nn	Periodic review of Hospitality Management
oo	Board of Governors Terms of Reference
pp	Meeting with Senior Staff
qq	Meeting with Students
rr	Meeting with Academic and Professional Support Staff.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

34 To test that specified standards beyond the threshold for courses sampled are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the review team examined a representative sample of seven sets of approved course documentation from the 11 programmes offered by the College.

35 To check that external examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold for courses sampled are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met, the review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Licentiate in Acupuncture. The sample covered all programmes from which student assessed work was scrutinised.

36 To test that marks and awards given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the review team examined a random and representative sample of assessed student work across all programmes and levels. The samples were taken from four programmes, comprising 96 pieces of assessed work and feedback drawn from 20 modules. The sample included work from Levels 4, 5 and 6 embracing a range of assessment methods, including written and practical examinations, case studies, role-playing scenarios, dissertations, project reports, presentations, reflective essays and work placement coursework portfolios, ensuring that the only Level 6 programme (acupuncture) and a programme which had placement learning was included. The sample included the full range of student marks.

37 To assess whether students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold, the review team met a sample 12 students from across all programmes and years.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

38 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to

ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

39 To identify the institutional approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation as the underlying basis for the standards of awards, the team examined academic policies and regulations, including the City College of Acupuncture (CCA) specification and regulations, Internal Verification Policy, and Assessment Policy.

40 To interrogate the robustness of the College's plans for maintaining comparable standards and to ensure that those plans are credible and evidence-based, the team examined Outcomes of Annual Monitoring, and Programme Team Meetings for both acupuncture and Higher National programmes.

41 To test that staff understand and apply the College's approach to maintaining comparable standards, the team held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff involved in assessment.

### **What the evidence shows**

42 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

43 The College delivers two types of qualification. Higher National qualifications designed by Pearson, for which Pearson retains responsibility for maintaining standards, and an acupuncture qualification (Licentiate in Acupuncture) which is designed and awarded by the College.

44 The College has in place an assessment policy that sets out principles and processes which, supported by a number of appropriate policies and processes, ensure that sector-recognised standards are maintained. For example, an internal verification policy and process and standardisation meetings establish the standards that must be met in marking and assessment. For Higher Nationals and the Diploma in Education and Training, the College follows the processes and guidance for assessment provided by Pearson to ensure that the sector-recognised standards are consistent with the relevant national qualification frameworks. For the Licentiate in Acupuncture, the College follows the BAAB guidance. The College's Academic Board terms of reference show that it has overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to Pearson's and BAAB policies and regulations, reporting on these matters to the Board of Governors. Academic Board minutes, annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports evidence the effective operation of these processes. Policy and procedures are in place to support students where circumstances beyond their control impair the ability to achieve standards beyond the threshold, such as the extenuating circumstances policy. The review team concludes that the College has comprehensive policies and procedures to support the maintenance of academic standards.

45 The College uses the programme specifications as the key reference points for the quality assurance, management and delivery of all of its programmes of study, and these are made available to all students, staff, external examiners, employers and professional and regulatory bodies. Sampled Higher National programme specifications evidence that the College produces detailed programme and assessment specifications which provide detail of the requirements to both pass a unit and to achieve a merit or a distinction.

46 The programme specification for the Acupuncture programme provides detailed information on the design and delivery of the programme and the support in place to ensure students have the opportunity to achieve their potential. The learning outcomes provided in the programme specification set the standard students are expected to meet on graduating

from the programme. The relevant level of these outcomes is confirmed in the mapping scrutinised by BAAB to confirm accreditation.

47 Module guides for both acupuncture and Higher National programmes provide information for students on what is required to both pass a unit and to achieve above the sector-recognised standard. Procedures are in place through the Internal Programme Approval Procedure to ensure that resources are in place to deliver the programmes described in the programme specification, at the appropriate level, prior to commencement of the programme, which ensure students have the opportunity to achieve standards above the threshold that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

48 Standards are verified externally through the College's use of Pearson's Assignment Checking Service where the briefs are inspected before delivery begins, and annually during the visit of the external examiner from Pearson. External examiners comment on the maintenance and application of academic standards and consider whether students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the sector-recognised level. External examiners reports confirm that standards beyond the threshold are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met.

49 Sampling of student assessed work for all programmes, including acupuncture and Higher National programmes, confirms that student assessed work is marked at the correct level appropriate to the programme they are studying. Feedback provided to students confirms where marks are awarded, they are appropriate to the level and they are informed how to improve and achieve the standard in future assessments.

50 Meeting with students confirms that they understand what is required of them, from both the assessment brief and instruction and feedback from the tutor, to reach standards beyond the threshold. They confirm that assessment criteria are explicitly linked to the module learning outcomes, and that they understand the criteria for success.

51 Meetings with staff involved in assessment confirm that staff understand and apply the College's approach to maintaining comparable standards and support achievement above the threshold. They have a comprehensive understanding of the College's policies and procedures and implement these effectively. The team therefore concludes that staff understand and apply the College's approach to maintaining comparable standards.

## **Conclusions**

52 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

53 For the College's Pearson provision, based on the evidence presented to it, the team determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the College's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The review team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately. Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

54 For the College's Licentiate in Acupuncture the standards the College has set beyond the threshold are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the College's academic regulations and policies ensure that such standards are set appropriately. Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications should have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.

55 The College has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures to support the maintenance of academic standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The College ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. This is evidenced by scrutiny of assessed student work which demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant standards have been met. The standards described in definitive course documentation beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers. Meetings with staff confirm that they understand and apply the College's approach to maintaining standards. Feedback from students confirm that they understand what is required to reach standards beyond the threshold level. External examiner reports and accreditation monitoring confirm that the College's plans for maintaining comparable standards are robust and credible. The standards described in definitive course documentation and assessment specifications beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers.

56 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

### **S3 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them**

57 This Core practice expects that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

58 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### **The evidence the team considered**

59 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a FHEQ-Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture mapping
- b Internal Verification Policy
- c External Examiner Report Part A (example)
- d External Examiner Report Part B (example)
- e Centre Annual Programme Monitoring Report (example)
- f Health and Social Care Unit 16 Pearson Checking Service Oct 2019
- g Academic Management Report (AMR) by Pearson (example)
- h Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2016-17
- i Annual Programme Monitoring Report RQF BUS 2016-17
- j Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HSC 2016-17
- k Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HMT and TTM 2016-17
- l Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2017-18
- m Annual Programme Monitoring Report RQF BUS 2017-18
- n Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HSC 2017-18
- o Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HMT and TTM 2017-18
- p Annual Programme Monitoring Report DET 2017-18
- q HND Bus EE Report RQF 18-19
- r HND Hospitality Management and, Travel and Tourism External Examiners Report
- s External Examiner Report Acupuncture 2016/17
- t External Examiner Report Acupuncture 2017/18
- u External Examiner Report Acupuncture 2018/19
- v City College of Acupuncture specification and programme regulations (SETA 1)
- w Committee Meeting Structure and Terms of Reference
- x Academic Board minutes
- y BAAB Accreditation Committee Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2015-16
- z BAAB Accreditation Committee Response to your Report dated 7th of August 2018
- aa Meeting with senior staff

bb Meeting with academic and professional support staff

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

60 To test whether external examiners consider that standards are credible and secure, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements, the review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and in Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Licentiate in Acupuncture. The team also looked at the external reports resulting from Pearson's annual monitoring process. This sample covered the four programmes from Levels 4, 5 and 6 from which student assessed work was scrutinised.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

61 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

62 To assess whether the College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for securing standards in partnership work, the team examined the College's relationship with its awarding partners through a range of documentation, including for the Licentiate in Acupuncture; the FHEQ-Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture (SETA) mapping, the City College Acupuncture specification (SETA 1), the BAAB Accreditation Committee Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2015-16, the BAAB Accreditation Committee Response Report 2018 and the Full Accreditation of City College of Acupuncture City Resolution 2016. For Pearson programmes; the Centre Annual Programme Monitoring Report, the Academic Management Report (AMR), the Health and Social Care Unit 16.

63 To identify how the College ensures the standards of awards are credible and secure where these are delivered by partners, the team reviewed the College's frameworks for determining policies and regulations, in particular the committee structure, committee terms of reference and the minutes of the academic board.

64 To test whether external examiners consider that standards are credible and secure, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements, the team examined annual monitoring reports for all programmes, internal verification policy, and external examiner reports.

65 To test that staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibility to the awarding organisation, the team met with senior staff, and teaching and professional support staff.

### **What the evidence shows**

66 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

67 The College has partnerships with Pearson and BAAB for the programmes that it delivers. Pearson is responsible for setting the standards of Higher National awards, while BAAB is responsible for accrediting the Licentiate in Acupuncture which is awarded by the College.

68 Relevant academic regulations are in place which ensure that Pearson's awards are secure and credible. Evidence to support this includes that the responsibilities of both parties as defined in the Pearson qualification approval and general regulations. The College's responsibilities, as set out in the Responsibility Checklist for Providers with Pearson Education Ltd provision, include, but are not limited to, designing a learning and teaching strategy and processes and procedures that ensure the strategy is regularly reviewed and modified; setting assessments in direct compliance with Pearson requirements; marking and moderation of student work; and giving students feedback on their work. Satisfactory operation of these processes for Higher National programmes is monitored by Pearson and is confirmed for 2018-19 through its annual Academic Management Report.

69 The review team examined a range of operational documentary evidence and reports, for example, the FHEQ-SETA mapping, the City College Acupuncture (CCA) specification (SETA 1), the BAAB FHEQ-SETA mapping Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2015-16, the BAAB Accreditation Committee Response to your Report 2018 and the Full Accreditation of City College of Acupuncture Resolution 2016. For Pearson programmes: the Centre Annual Programme Monitoring Report, the Academic Management Report (AMR), the Health and Social Care Unit 16 Pearson Checking Service Oct 2019 which endorse courses delivered in partnership.

70 The senior leadership team role is to maintain and monitor partnerships, accreditations and validations with external bodies. In meeting the team, senior staff and teaching and professional support staff who will manage the partnership agreements, gave the team confidence that they understand their responsibilities to the partnership through describing in detail the range of evidence-based plans for securing standards.

71 The College's Academic Board has oversight and responsibility for academic standards and quality of the academic portfolio. As such, the Academic Board considers and approves reports and other matters related to partners, such as Pearson and BAAB. The Board of Governors oversee all aspects of education provision and provides further assurance that standards are secure because this is a standing item on the agenda at meetings. Annual monitoring processes are in place for all programmes. Annual monitoring reports confirm that plans for maintaining standards are secure. Academic Board minutes, annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports confirm the effective operation of policies and processes for securing academic standards.

72 The City College Acupuncture course is accredited by BAAB and undergoes Annual Monitoring from BAAB and full re-accreditation every five years. The College provides BAAB with the completed Annual Audit Monitoring Form, and receives a detailed response on each occasion which acknowledges the success of the programme and any outstanding issues that need addressing. External examiner reports confirm for all programmes that sector-recognised standards are met and identify areas for improvement, such as variability in grading, which the examiner notes have been addressed in the subsequent report. External examiner reports for BTEC and Acupuncture confirm that external examiners consider that standards are credible and secure, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements.

## **Conclusions**

73 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

74 The review team concludes that the College has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of the awards it will deliver on behalf of its awarding organisations are credible and secure. This is because the College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies for working with Pearson to ensure the standards of its awards are credible and secure. Staff fully understand their responsibilities towards the awarding organisations and following their regulations as well as using external examiners with regard to maintaining academic standards. The review team conclude, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

75 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.



## **S4 The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent**

77 This Core practice expects that the provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

78 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

79 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- b Internal Programme Approval Procedure
- c Internal Verification Policy
- d Assessment Policy
- e Periodic Review guidance
- f Minutes of meetings of Academic Board
- g Minutes of Programme Team Meetings
- h Minutes of Assessment Boards
- i Marking and Internal Verification (assessment) schedule (example)
- j Internal Survey Results
- k National Student Survey
- l Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings
- m BTEC Annual Student Survey 2018 and 2019
- n HND Business (Management) Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- o HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- p HND Health Care Practice Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- q HND International Travel and Tourism Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- r HND Social and Community Work Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- s HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook QCF
- t HND Health and Social Care (Management) Programme Handbook QCF
- u HND Travel and Tourism Programme Handbook QCF
- v HND Bus EE Report RQF 18-19
- w HND Hospitality Management and, Travel and Tourism External Examiners Report 18-19
- x Records of course review events
- y Internal verification and external examining reports
- z External examiner reports College responses to external examiner reports
- aa Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2016-17
- bb Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2017-18
- ba BAAB Response to Annual Monitoring
- cc Samples of student assessed work

dd	Student submission
ee	Meeting with Senior Staff
ff	Meeting with Students
gg	Meeting with Academic and Professional Support Staff

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

80 To assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the courses sampled, the review team examined a representative sample of seven sets of approved course documentation from the 11 programmes offered by the College.

81 To interrogate the use of external examiners and that the College considers and respond to externals' reports regarding standards appropriately and to identify externals' views about reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes, the review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Licentiate in Acupuncture.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

82 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

83 To identify how external experts are used in maintaining academic standards and how the College's assessment and classification processes operate, the team reviewed academic regulations, policies, procedures and guidance for the assessment of students and the use of external expertise within its various academic processes. These include the Internal Programme Approval Procedure, the Internal Verification Policy, the Learning and Teaching Policy, and the Periodic Review Guidance.

84 To assess whether plans for using external expertise in maintaining standards and plans for assessment classification processes are credible, robust and evidence-based, the team considered the Assessment Board for each programme, (student handbook) and through Pearson's Checking Service. The team also examined minutes of meetings of Academic Board, Programme Teams, Assessment Boards and assessment standardisation activities.

85 In order to assess how external expertise is used to support the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the courses sampled, the team examined definitive programme documentation and student programme handbooks. The team also reviewed records of course review events in order to confirm that the views of external experts are appropriately used to inform updating of the curriculum.

86 To identify how other organisations regard the use of external expertise and the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment processes and the College's assessment and classification processes, the team considered the views of professional bodies and local employers who work with the College, for example, the BAAB response to the College's annual monitoring report.

87 The team reviewed samples of assessed student work, and the associated internal verification and external examining reports, and minutes of assessment boards to confirm that assessment and classification are carried out in line with the College's and course's requirements.

88 To test that staff understand requirements for the use of external expertise and the College's assessment and classification processes, the team held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff.

89 To identify how students regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes, the team met with students; considered minutes of Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings (SSLC); and scrutinised results from both internal and external student surveys.

### **What the evidence shows**

90 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

91 The College has clear policies and procedures for the use of external expertise in maintaining standards, and assessment and classification processes. The College makes use of external experts both as external examiners to provide oversight of academic standards, and as external advisers with particular discipline expertise during the programme design, approval and review processes of all its programmes. The role of the external examiner is described by the College in its programme handbooks. Pearson's external examiners engage with the College to sample assessed work and meet staff and students in accordance with the awarding organisation's procedures. For the acupuncture programme, external examiners approve assessments, samples student work and attend Assessment Boards. The team concludes that the College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards.

92 The team found that arrangements for assessment and classification are credible and robust as the Assessment Policy addresses all key points, especially the need to assess all learning outcomes and to make the assessment criteria clear to students. It allows for formative assessment at any point and stipulates that a schedule of summative assessment is published at the start of each term. All assignment briefs are internally verified and moderated using the awarding organisation's assignment checking service. The Policy defines the roles of staff in the various processes. The College's Internal Verification Policy set out staff roles and responsibilities and the steps that the process will follow, including the internal verification of assignment briefs, the creation of sampling plans for each cohort of students and standardisation meetings. Standardisation meetings are seen as an essential tool in ensuring that assessment criteria are interpreted in same way, as a mechanism to share good practice and an opportunity to engage in continuing professional development. The team concludes that the College has clear and comprehensive regulations for assessment and classification that are reliable, fair and transparent.

93 Assessment schedules, grading and associated internal verification of assessment procedures are well planned and transparent. Assessments on Pearson programmes are internally verified and moderated using the awarding organisation's assignment checking service. Assessment Boards have clear terms of reference which are fit for purpose, and which are followed scrupulously, as shown in the Assessment Board minutes. All outcomes from student assessment are considered at an Assessment Board during which grades are confirmed. Acupuncture external examiners are present at Assessment Boards, and Pearson external examiners visit periodically to engage in a detailed verification of assessment grading. External examiners regularly meet students during their visits, for

example at Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Meetings. Reports from external examiners, which note where their recommendations have been actioned, are considered in detail by senior staff following Assessment Boards and subsequently in Programme Team Meetings and at Academic Board. They are shared openly with students on the virtual learning environment (VLE), as confirmed by the students, by staff, in programme team minutes and in the Student Submission. A formal written response is made to Acupuncture external examiners. The team concludes that plans for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards, and assessment and classification are robust and credible.

94 The College has procedures for both approval of new programmes and for periodic review of all existing programmes; both are clearly described in the Internal Programme Approval Procedure and the Periodic Review Guidance. The procedure for initial approval focuses principally on the business and resource needs of a new programme, reflecting the fact that the College relies on its awarding and accrediting organisations for developing the programme specification and mapping it against the FHEQ. The periodic review process culminates in detailed scrutiny of the programme and its student achievement by a panel which includes external academic, external professional, and student membership, and from which clear direction to enhance programme delivery and student support emerges.

95 The College is currently updating its Pearson programmes and is using a range of external advice, including its external examiners, its network of work placement providers, commercial and business contacts, its specialist visiting lecturers and its Employers' Forum, as evidenced in programme team and Academic Board minutes and confirmed in discussion with employers and College senior staff. Clinical practice in the accredited Level 6 Licentiate programme is overseen by an external professional practitioner, whose reports are made available to the programme's external examiner as shown in the programme team minutes and confirmed by academic staff. The College provides the professional accrediting body (BAAB) with the completed Annual Audit Monitoring Form, and receives a detailed response on each occasion which acknowledges the success of the programme and any outstanding issues that need addressing. The detailed consideration of external third-party views within College processes reinforces the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes.

96 Sampling of assessed student work confirm the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and that it is carried out in line with the College's and course requirements. Staff adhere to the assessment strategy defined in the approved programme documentation, to the College's assessment policy and to the internal processes to verify the standard of both the assessment instruments and the grading. The internal verification process is rigorous; errors are minor and corrected with alacrity before work is released to students. External examiners affirm that the assessment processes are carried out in accordance with the awarding body's and professional body's expectations.

97 Senior staff, teaching staff and support staff understand and are able to articulate the College's assessment processes, and their role therein. College procedures are readily accessible, and staff are aware of the role of the external examiner and can describe in some detail how comments from externals inform the annual monitoring process and the development of the programme annual monitoring reports. Action plans are revisited regularly to ensure completion. Minutes of Programme Team Meetings and Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings, discussions with staff and students, including in the Student Submission, demonstrate wide familiarity with the comprehensive regulatory framework. The team concludes that staff understand the requirements for and the use of external expertise, and the College's assessment and classification processes.

98 Students confirm that the College's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. Outcomes of student surveys, both internally and nationally

administered, show high levels of student satisfaction with approaches to assessment, commenting particularly on the clarity of assessment criteria. Students state that they welcome the College's approach to assessment, in particular the variety of approaches adopted, and the clarity of assignment specifications. Students confirm that assessment criteria are explicitly linked to the module learning outcomes, and that they understand the criteria for success.

## **Conclusions**

99 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

100 The College has clear and comprehensive regulations and/or policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards through its regulatory framework which meets the requirements of its awarding and accrediting bodies. Records of course approval and review confirm that external expertise is used according to the College's regulations. The regulatory framework includes detailed arrangements for the assessment of students against the prescribed standards, and the College's internal verification procedures are robust. Assessed student work examined by the team confirms assessment and classification are carried out in line with the College's and course's requirements. The framework also contains arrangements for the use of external academic expertise in the periodic review of programmes and for the use of external examiners to verify the standards being achieved by the students. Reports from external examiners form a central element of the College's process of programme annual monitoring and they confirm that the College's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. Responses to external examiner reports confirm that the College gives that expertise due consideration. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

101 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q1 The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system**

102 This Core practice expects that the provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

103 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

104 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy
- b CCA Recruitment and Selection Policy
- c Equality and Diversity Policy
- d HND Business (Management) Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- e HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- f HND Health Care Practice Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- g HND International Travel and Tourism Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- h HND Social and Community Work Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- i HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook QCF
- j HND Health and Social Care (Management) Programme Handbook QCF
- k HND Travel and Tourism Programme Handbook QCF
- l Acupuncture Programme Specification
- m General Student Handbook
- n Equality and Diversity Policy
- o City College of Acupuncture (CCA) specification (SETA 1)
- p Interviewer checklists
- q Acupuncture Interview Form
- r English Literacy Test example - Neighbourhood Watch
- s City College of Acupuncture programme Admission
- t Acupuncture Open day PowerPoint
- u City College of Acupuncture Pre application guidelines
- v Equality and Diversity Policy
- w City College of Acupuncture Information for potential applicants
- x Agency Agreements
- y Meetings with students
- z Meeting with teaching and professional support staff
- aa City College website
- bb City College of Acupuncture website
- cc Student Admission Records
- dd QAA Student Submission Oct 2019
- ee Admission Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

## **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

105 To test whether admissions requirements for courses sampled reflect the College's overall regulations and/or policy, the review team examined a representative sample of seven sets of approved course documentation from the 11 programmes offered by the College.

106 To assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled, the review team considered nine admission records randomly sampled from three courses, three from each course. These were the Licentiate in Acupuncture, September 2019 cohort, the Hospitality Management HND, May 2018 cohort, and the Travel and Tourism Management HND, January 2019, cohort.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

107 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

108 To identify institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection, and admission of students; roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the admissions process; support for applicants; how the College verifies applicants' entry requirements; how the College facilitates an inclusive admissions system and how it handles complaints and appeals, and to assess whether the College's has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that the admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive, the team considered the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy, the Additional Recruitment and Selection Strategy, the Equality and Diversity Policy, the interview checklists, Interview Forms, English Literacy Tests, admission information for acupuncture programme applicants, and the Admissions Complaints Procedure.

109 To test whether information given to applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose, the team assessed the information on the College website, and also on the City College of Acupuncture website.

110 To test whether admissions requirements for courses sampled reflect the College's overall regulations and/or policy, the team examined course documentation in the form of student course handbooks for sampled Higher National programmes, the Acupuncture Programme Specification and the general student handbook.

111 To interrogate how the College ensures that third parties understand and implement the College's admissions policy and process effectively, the team reviewed the arrangements with recruitment agents.

112 To test whether staff understand their responsibilities, are appropriately skilled and supported and can articulate how the College's approach to inclusivity is manifest in the admissions process, the review team met four senior staff, including the Managing Director and Principal, three programme leaders, three teachers, two support staff and a representative from BAAB.

113 To assess students' views about the admissions processes, the team held meetings with students.

## What the evidence shows

114 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

115 The Higher National application and admissions process follows the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy. The Policy sets out that the College uses the five 'Schwartz principles' to produce a fair admissions system. These principles state that a fair admissions system should be transparent; enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course as judged by their achievements and their potential; strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid; seek to minimise barriers for applicants; be professional in every aspect; and underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and processes. The Policy also sets out that the College is committed to widening participation and encourages applicants from groups of people who are known to be disadvantaged. The Equality and Diversity Policy makes it clear that the College welcomes students from all sectors of society and that course publicity will ensure that this is evident and that the Policy applies to the recruitment and admissions process. The Policy sets out that Academic Board has oversight of, and responsibility for, all matters regarding admissions and student recruitment.

116 For HND applicants, entry criteria is set out in the Policy and differentiates between mature applicants, whose prior qualifications and work experience may be considered, and those who have recently left education who are admitted on the basis of academic achievement. Any students who are non-native English speakers or who have not studied the final two years of school in English, need to demonstrate ability in English at a standard commensurate with IELTS 5.5, with a minimum of 5.0 being awarded on individual sections. The College uses an English literacy test for this purpose. If students are native speakers, but do not have a relevant English qualification, they are encouraged to enrol onto a Level 2 English course.

117 Applicants are asked to disclose a disability, long-term medical conditions or mental health issues at the start of the course in order that any additional support requirements can be discussed. Requests for support in regard to special needs or disability will be considered at the initial testing or interview. Staff will note the potential need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants. Applicants are signposted to the Disabled Student Policy.

118 The Policy clearly sets out that Diploma of Education and Training (DET) students must be able to meet the requirement for 100 hours of teaching practice, plus the requirement for observation and assessment of performance, without which they will not complete the programme. Applicants are expected to find suitable employment in order to be enrolled.

119 Applications are made either directly to the College or through an agent. Applicants who meet the entry criteria are invited to attend an interview and are interviewed by staff trained in interviewing. To ensure consistency, the HND programmes interview team have a detailed interview checklist which includes, for example, verifying applicants' entry qualifications; giving information to applicants regarding recognition of prior learning, compulsory work experience requirements; motivation to study; English language requirements; financial considerations; and outlining the College's policy on teaching and learning. Applicants are notified of admissions decisions normally within 48 hours and applicants have the right to appeal a decision or make a complaint on certain grounds, although the Policy does not specify to whom the complaint or appeal should be made.

120 The admissions process for the Licentiate in Acupuncture also follows the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy. Entry criteria is set out along with the



requirement that applicants submit a personal statement detailing why the applicant would like to study at the College. In addition, the College has in place the CCA Recruitment and Selection Policy which gives further detail on the selection of students with additional needs and the consideration of reasonable adjustments. It further explains that while there are no written rules, age on entry to this course is critical, and that the College is unlikely to enrol students who are under 21. Senior staff explained that, for the Licentiate, a pre-application process lead to no unsuccessful applications as applicants are able to decide for themselves whether to apply depending on whether they feel the course is appropriate for them. The review team concludes that the College has a clear policy for the recruitment and admission of students, and that its plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive are robust and credible.

121 The College's Agency Agreement covers the roles and responsibilities of both the College and the Agent and is signed by representatives from both parties. The Agency Code of Ethics states that the College will operate with a culture of openness, trust and integrity in educational and business practices. In this context, the College will only work with agents who recruit eligible and genuine students to the most suitable course available. Agents must fully support and follow the College's principles, policies and procedures and act for the benefit of the student and the College in all activities. Subsequent sections of the code describe, for example, attributes and abilities, professional conduct, student support, accountability and equal opportunities. The team concludes that third parties understand and implement the College's admissions policy and processes effectively.

122 The approved course documentation clearly outlines the admissions criteria and process which are consistent with the criteria and process outlined in the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy. The Licentiate in Acupuncture course outlines the academic admissions criteria under section 14 of the Acupuncture programme specification. The wording of some of the statements is not transparent: 'GCSE: normally English Language at or above Grade C; IELTS requirement is normally 6.5 in all tests. If appropriate, recognition of prior learning (RPL) may be assessed and accredited.' It is not transparent under what conditions a person may be admitted to the course without an English language GCSE at Grade C or above, an IELTS requirement of 6.5, or under what conditions it is appropriate to recognise prior learning. The team is satisfied that the approved documentation for the HND programmes reflects the College's overall regulations and/or policy because there is consistency across the documents sampled, however, the admissions criteria to the Licentiate in Acupuncture are not as transparent because the statements do not set out under what conditions the stated academic and RPL are implemented as admissions criteria. However, on balance, the team concludes that admissions requirements set out in approved course documentation are consistent with the College's policy and regulations.

123 Information for applicants for Higher National and the DET programme is available on the College website and for the Licentiate in Acupuncture on the City College of Acupuncture website. These give details of the fees, including where there is a compulsory work experience requirement, entry requirements, advice and guidance for applicants, along with, for example, the Admissions Policy and an application form.

124 For the Licentiate in Acupuncture programme, the admissions process is outlined in the Programme Admission Document. There is a pre-application process that consists of an open day where information is provided about the course which is followed up by a clinic observation. The Programme Admission Document states that applicants need to complete a standard application form and a 400-500-word personal statement. The Acupuncture Interview Form guides the interviewer through a series of practical checks, verification of academic background and disability. Under practical checks, applicants are required to consent to acting as models for tutors to explain anatomy or demonstrate practical skills. The

requirements are partially outlined in the pre-application process and there is one reference in the information brochure. However, no mention of these requirements is made in the open day presentation, but the staff state that students are made fully aware of this before they enrol. The team concludes that the written information given to potential applicants in the pre-interview process for the Licentiate in Acupuncture is not transparent and fit for purpose because the practical examination requirements are not set out fully to potential applicants in the pre-application process to allow them to make an informed decision. However, on balance, the review team concludes that the information given to applicants is transparent, inclusive, accessible and fit for purpose.

125 Three successful applicant records were sampled from the Licentiate in Acupuncture (September 2019 cohort). The College does not have any unsuccessful applications as the pre-application procedure points applicants to the most appropriate course. Of the three records sampled, all had an appropriate educational background to study at degree level (one student with Level 3 qualifications; two students with a previous degree). All records included the programme's application form, one out of the three records sampled included the personal statement. Three records were sampled from the Hospitality Management HND (May 2018 cohort). Of the two successful applicants, the admissions process was consistent with the process set out in the student recruitment and admissions policy. The unsuccessful applicant did not achieve the pass level on the English language test. Three records were sampled from the Travel and Tourism Management HND (January 2019 cohort). For this cohort, there were no unsuccessful applicants. Of the three successful applicants, the admissions process was consistent with the process set out in the student recruitment and admissions policy. The team therefore concludes that reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled; that the College's policies are implemented in practice and that the minor omissions did not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interests of students.

126 In the meeting with teaching and professional support staff, they were able to identify the appropriate policies relating to admission, for example the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy and the Equality and Diversity Policy and they were able to fully explain their role in their implementation. Staff also stated that they had been comprehensively trained and supported to do this. The review team therefore concludes that the teaching and professional support staff understand their responsibilities, are appropriately skilled and supported and can articulate how the College's approach to inclusivity is manifest in the admissions process.

127 In the meeting with students, representatives from both the HND courses and the Licentiate in Acupuncture stated that the admissions process is reliable, fair and inclusive. Students stated that admissions was a 'nice and straightforward experience; the entry test is fair, and feedback is good'. The team concludes that students tend to agree that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive.

## **Conclusions**

128 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

129 The review team concludes that the College has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. The College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive. Information given to applicants is,

with the exception of the practice component of the Licentiate in Acupuncture, transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose. The review team notes that the Licentiate in Acupuncture course uses a pre-interview process which is not completely transparent and provides opaque information regarding the consent required for the practice component of the course, because this information is only partially given to potential applicants at the pre-application stage. Admissions requirements for the courses sampled reflect the College's overall regulations and/or policy. Reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled and, although admissions records contained omissions in that two out of the three Licentiate in Acupuncture records sampled did not contain a personal statement, this did not harm the integrity of the procedure nor the interests of students. The HND programmes have a clear policy for the recruitment and admission of students, entry requirements are consistent with the College's policy, and admissions records demonstrate that the College's policies are implemented in practice. The Policy is implemented by staff who understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained. The review team concludes, therefore, that, on balance, this Core practice is met.

130 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## Q2 The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses

132 This Core practice expects that the provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

133 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the team considered

134 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Introduction and Q2 submission
- b Internal Programme Approval Procedure
- c Assignment Brief (example)
- d Internal Verification of Assignment Brief (example)
- e Internal Verification Policy
- f Assessment Policy
- g Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy
- h Learning and Teaching Policy
- i Assignment Brief and Internal Verification of Assignment Brief
- j Committee Terms of Reference
- k Staff guidance on creating and designing learning activities
- l How to Use Kahoot in lectures v2
- m VLE minimum requirement guidelines
- n HND Business (Management) Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- o HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- p HND Health Care Practice Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- q HND International Travel and Tourism Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- r HND Social and Community Work Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- s HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook QCF
- t HND Health and Social Care (Management) Programme Handbook QCF
- u HND Travel and Tourism Programme Handbook QCF
- v Acupuncture Programme Specification
- w FHEQ-Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture mapping
- x External Examiner Reports Part A and B
- y Acupuncture External Examiner Reports 2017 and 2018
- z HND Programmes External Examiner Reports
- aa BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form/Report
- bb Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Forms
- cc Pearson AMR 2018-19
- dd Annual Programme Monitoring Reports HND/HNC Programmes
- ee Student Assessed Work (SAS) - Samples - Acupuncture HND

ff	Full Accreditation of City College of Acupuncture City College of Acupuncture Resolution 2016
gg	Meeting with senior staff
hh	Meeting with students
ii	Meeting with employers
jj	Meeting with teaching and professional support staff
kk	Student Submission
ll	Internal Student Survey
mm	National Student Survey
nn	Acupuncture unit evaluations
oo	BTEC Annual Student Surveys 2018/19
pp	Lesson observations.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

135 The review team examined a representative sample of seven sets of approved course documentation from the 11 programmes offered by the College.

136 To identify external examiners' views about the courses sampled, the review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Licentiate in Acupuncture. The sample covered all programmes from which assessed student work was scrutinised.

137 To identify students' views about the quality of the courses sampled, the team examined a comprehensive range of surveys which included the National Student Survey (NSS), and the BTEC Higher National Student Survey. The team also sampled three student evaluation forms from three programmes at random as a comparison with the external surveys (nine in total): the Year 1 Acupuncture (three students), the HND Business (Unit 3, Human Resource Management) and HND Health and Social Care (Unit 13 Managing Human Resources).

138 To test whether course delivery is high quality, the review team observed five teaching sessions at Levels 4, 5 and 6, including the Higher National programmes, the Licentiate in Acupuncture and the Diploma in Education and Training programme.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

139 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

140 The team examined the following relevant policies and processes: the Internal Programme Approval Procedure, the Internal Verification Policy and the Assessment Policy, the Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy and the Learning and Teaching Policy to identify the College's approach to designing and delivering high-quality courses.

141 The team examined approved course documentation for both Higher National and the Acupuncture programme in order to verify that all elements of the courses sampled are high quality (curriculum design, content and organisation; learning, teaching and assessment) and that teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.

142 The team scrutinised external examiner reports and accreditation monitoring reports to identify views about the quality of the courses in the sample.

143 To identify other organisations' views about the quality of the courses, the review team met with employers.

144 To assess how staff ensure courses are high quality, the team had meetings with senior staff and academic and professional support staff.

145 To identify students' views about the quality of course sampled, the team held meetings with students and reviewed the student submission.

### **What the evidence shows**

146 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

147 Beyond designing assessments, the College does not design the Higher National programmes that it delivers on behalf of Pearson. However, it both designed and delivers its Licentiate in Acupuncture which is accredited by BAAB. For its acupuncture programme, the College has overall responsibility for setting and maintaining standards, and for ensuring that clinical and ethical practices align with external requirements. The College works with BAAB to design and deliver the course using the British Acupuncture Association (BAC) Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture (SETA). This is mapped against *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ) Level 6.

148 Academic Board is responsible for the approval of new programmes and the re-approval of existing programmes. This function is supported through the College's Internal Programme Approval Procedure which sets out that all programmes offered by the College require approval by an appropriate awarding body and that, to assist with planning process, the College has developed its own internal process designed to complement the systems used by the awarding body and is central to the College's assurance of the quality of its provision. This procedure also provides a mechanism to ensure appropriate resources and staffing are in place to ensure that the delivery of any future programmes is high quality. The College Assessment Policy supports the design and delivery of assessment.

149 The Learning and Teaching Policy and Procedure underpins the delivery of high-quality courses and sets out its aim to ensure that teaching at the College is of the highest quality through, for example, using assessment to provide effective learning opportunities; providing access to resources that enable effective teaching, learning and assessment to take place and appropriate learning outcomes to be achieved; ensuring learning sessions show clear evidence of planning, that schemes of work are produced for each course unit and are linked to the learning outcomes and that sessions will focus on student progression. Academic staff are provided with detailed guidance on, for example, the design and delivery of learning activities for teaching and learning, the use of interactive technology in lectures and use of the VLE. The team concludes that the College has robust and credible plans for the designing and delivering high-quality courses and that the College's policies for course design and delivery facilitate the design and delivery of high-quality courses.

150 Sampled programme specifications evidence that the College produces detailed programme and assessment specifications. For the Licentiate, staff select units aligned to the SETA which are mapped to the FHEQ, and design and develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies, as well as learning materials. The course documentation confirms that the design of teaching and assessment will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Assignment briefs are subject to internal verification prior to their release to students. This is to ensure that they have been developed to meet the requirements of the specification and to ensure that students will be able to demonstrate that they meet the

intended learning outcomes. The College also makes use of Pearson's assignment checking service. Assignment briefs are also considered during standardisation meetings. Programme handbooks for BTEC programmes confirm that the design of teaching and assessment provide a high-quality experience and support students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. The team concludes that approved course documentation indicates that teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.

151 External examiner reports confirm that courses provide a high-quality academic experience. For BTEC programmes this is supported by the outcomes of annual monitoring by Pearson, and internal annual programme monitoring. The College achieved full accreditation for its Acupuncture programme from BAAB in 2016. A representative from BAAB confirmed that BAAB's standards are mapped to the FHEQ. The outcome of annual monitoring evidences that the Acupuncture programme has been of high quality since accreditation in 2016.

152 Employers state that they consider that the College's courses provide a high quality and appropriate academic experience that develops employment skills and prepares students for future employment. The employers who spoke to the review team were very complimentary and supportive of the College's study programmes and believed that the quality and standard of student work is good.

153 Staff are able to articulate what high quality means in the context of the College. Meetings with senior staff and academic staff involved in the delivery of programmes confirm that a range of appropriate and effective approaches are in place to support the design and delivery of high-quality courses, for example training in writing programme specifications and collaborative team meetings. Staff all articulated that their objective is to deliver high-quality courses and described the procedures they have in place to ensure this through their committee structure.

154 Feedback from students, internal surveys and external surveys show a high level of satisfaction with the quality of their experience from DET, Higher National and acupuncture students. Feedback from students on Higher National programmes (2019) confirms that the majority understand what they need to do in order to achieve the qualification at the start. The same survey confirms that all students understand how they would be assessed on the course. Feedback from the meeting with students and unit evaluations confirms that acupuncture students are satisfied with the quality of their academic experience. The review team concludes that students tend to regard their courses as being of high quality.

155 Lesson observations confirmed that staff delivery of these lessons provide a high-quality academic experience at the requisite level of the FHEQ. Examples from across the observations include that the objectives of the lessons observed were clear; there was evidence of good planning and organisation with the delivery of a clearly structured session linked to the session's objectives and aligned to the end-of-module assessment; evidence of effective time management; a focus on the practical application of knowledge; a sound teaching methodology; students were sufficiently engaged; the lecturer was able to give a clear example of where an adaptation had been made to support a student's specific needs; and that sessions were inclusive, with the majority of students making a contribution. The team therefore concludes that, based on its observations, course delivery is of high quality.

## **Conclusions**

156 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account

of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

157 The review team concludes that the College designs and delivers high-quality courses. The College has in place credible, robust and evidence-based plans and processes for designing and delivering high-quality courses through its Learning and Teaching Policy and Procedure, the Internal Programme Approval Procedure, and the Internal Verification Policy. Approved course documentation, particularly programme specifications, indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. External examiners and third parties confirm that the courses concerned are of a high quality. Staff are able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of the College and demonstrate how the provision meets that definition through the team's observations of teaching and learning which show clarity of objectives, good planning and organisation, a sound method or approach, good delivery, appropriate content, effective use of resources and student engagement. Feedback from students confirms that they regard their courses as being of high quality. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

158 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.



### **Q3 The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience**

160 This Core practice expects that the provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

161 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### **The evidence the team considered**

162 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Introduction and Q3 submission
- b Learning and Teaching Policy
- c Staff Development Policy
- d Staff guidance on creating and designing learning activities
- e How to Use Kahoot in lectures v2
- f VLE minimum requirement guidelines
- g Continuing Professional Development (CPD) agenda and training slides
- h Programme Handbook (example)
- i Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy parts A and B
- j Teaching Observation Forms
- k CPD Plan and Record (example)
- l Acupuncture PTM minutes
- m Business Programme Team Meeting minutes
- n Diploma in Education and Training Programme Team Meeting minutes
- o Hospitality and Travel and Tourism Programme Team Meeting minutes
- p Health and Social Care Programme Team Meeting minutes
- q Job advertisement screenshot (Times HE Uni Jobs clip)
- r Interview panel schedule (example)
- s Staff induction schedule (example)
- t CCA Lecturer job description
- u CCA Module coordinator job description
- v Job description - City College Lecturer
- w Job Description - Welfare Officer Student Loan Officer Head of Admissions
- x Job Description - IT Support
- y Staff CVs
- z Staffing structure chart
- aa Timetabling Guidance (inc staff-student ratio)
- bb Student Submission
- cc National Student Survey Results
- dd Internal Student Survey Results
- ee BTEC Annual Student Survey 2018 and 2019
- ff BAAB Accreditation Report Resolution 2016

gg	Lesson observations
hh	Student Assessed Work samples - Acupuncture
ii	Student Assessed Work samples - Higher National Programmes
jj	HND Bus EE Report RQF 18-19
kk	HND Hospitality Management and, Travel and Tourism External Examiners Report 18-19
ll	Meeting with senior staff
mm	Meetings with students
nn	Meeting with employers
oo	Meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

163 To identify students' views about sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff, the team examined a comprehensive range of surveys which included the National Student Survey (NSS), and the BTEC Higher National Student Survey. The team also sampled three student evaluation forms from three programmes at random as a comparison with the external surveys (nine in total): the Year 1 Acupuncture (three students), the HND Business (Unit 3, Human Resource Management) and HND Health and Social Care (Unit 13 Managing Human Resources).

164 To test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience, the review team observed five teaching sessions at Levels 4, 5 and 6, including the Higher National programmes, the Licentiate in Acupuncture and the Diploma in Education and Training programme.

165 To assess whether the staff sampled are appropriately qualified and skilled to perform their roles effectively; to assess that the staff sampled were recruited according to the College's policies and procedures, the review team examined a representative sample of 21 CVs and five job descriptions for teaching and professional support staff and held meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

166 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

167 To identify how the College recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience, and to assess whether the College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that it has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience, the review team considered a range of evidence, including Learning and Teaching Policy; Staff Development Policy; guidance on creating and designing learning activities and use of technology to support learning; details of continuing professional development (CPD) sessions; Teaching Observation Policy; programme handbooks.

168 To identify other organisations' views about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff, the review team considered BAAB accreditation reports.

169 To identify the roles and positions the College has to deliver a high-quality learning experience and assess whether they are sufficient, the review team considered Staffing

structures and associated procedures for allocating teaching responsibilities through timetabling.

170 To assess whether students consider that the College has sufficient staff and that those staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, the review team met with a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years.

### **What the evidence shows**

171 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

172 The staffing structure chart indicates that the College has an appropriate level of staffing commensurate with the size and scale of its provision, to support the management and delivery of student learning. Timetabling guidance, which incorporates detailed planning of, for example, staff:student ratios, programme requirements, times and dates, planning processes, requests for changes and consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion matters, ensure that the College has sufficient teaching staff to deliver a high-quality teaching experience. Senior staff stated that the College has a pool of part-time staff that they can call to ensure sufficiency of appropriately qualified and skilled staff.

173 Recruitment and selection processes confirm to the team that the College ensures staff qualifications and prior experience are assessed as part of the recruitment and selection process. These include checking of previous experience and qualifications, an interview and a presentation by the candidates. Successful candidates are provided with an induction programme and support from a mentor. The induction programme incorporates performance management, CPD, and an introduction to all policies and procedures.

174 The Learning and Teaching Policy sets out the College's philosophy that places students at the centre of a learning process that supports them to take responsibility for their learning. The Policy identifies teaching quality as a core value for the College and sets out practical steps staff undertake to achieve it. Guidance on implementing these practical steps is provided for staff through detailed guidance on creating and designing learning activities and use of technology to support learning. This is also supported through regular all-staff CPD sessions which include sessions on peer observations to develop teaching through planning and observer feedback, assessment and feedback.

175 The College's Staff Development Policy identifies the role of staff as the key factor in the delivery of high-quality teaching. The Staff Development Policy sets out that all staff will be encouraged to develop their potential, including the gaining of appropriate qualifications to continue their professional development and to learn new skills relevant to their role. Staff development needs are identified through the performance management system, through improvement planning, by the individual member of staff or through work scrutiny, for example through peer observation. The policy demonstrates a strong commitment to staff development which is supported by a mandatory Teaching Observation Policy, staff engagement with individual planned activities and collective training for professional development.

176 Responsibility for the professional development of teaching staff resides with respective managers/Programme Leaders and priorities for development are identified at both programme, as discussed at programme team meetings and institutional level. The Teaching Observation Policy and associated documents includes the requirement of one formal observation by a senior member of academic staff, one peer observation, and at least one drop-in observation of teaching staff by the relevant Programme Leader each academic year. The observations result in action plans identifying strengths and areas for development. More frequent observations take place if any issues with teaching and learning quality are evident. The results are triangulated with student feedback and sampling of

schemes of work and assessment. Feedback from staff confirms the value of this activity in supporting the development of teaching practice. The review team concludes that the College has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff.

177 Scrutiny of a sample of key job descriptions and a representative sample of staff CVs evidence that teaching and professional services staff are suitably qualified and have the appropriate career experience to support/deliver a high-quality learning experience. Teaching staff are at least qualified to honours degree level and many have master's degrees in the subjects that they are teaching. All have appropriate and relevant industrial experience for the subjects and level they are teaching. Most have teaching qualifications or are in the process of gaining them. The BAAB accreditation report from 2016-17 commends the College for a strong and committed teaching team. The team concludes that the staff sampled are appropriately skilled and qualified to perform their roles effectively.

178 In the 2018-19 National Student Survey, students expressed satisfaction with 'Teaching on my course'. In the 2019 and 2018 BTEC Higher National Student Survey students report feeling well informed of the requirements of their course and supported. The most recent internal survey shows that Higher National students strongly agree that: 'My lecturer made the aims and learning objectives of this unit clear to me, the teaching and learning activities used in class made the subject interesting and the lecturer was very knowledgeable about the subject'. This high level of satisfaction with teaching is supported in the student submission where students state that lecturers at the College are highly trained, that they have relevant professional experience and teach to a high standard. External examiner reports note that students perceive the teaching to be effective and that tutors are knowledgeable and approachable. The review team concludes that internal and external feedback from students on the quality of their learning experience evidence that students tend to agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

179 Lesson observations confirm that staff delivery of these lessons provide a high-quality academic experience. For each session observed there was evidence of planning through a lesson plan with learning outcomes. Examples from across the observations include that the content of the lesson was appropriate to the module; a mix of methods of teaching was used, including some relevant professionally oriented discussion; tutors gave students time to reflect, conduct tasks and ask questions; guided discussions brought out the core themes of the lesson; the tutor took into consideration that for many students, English is not their first language and peer support for language was encouraged; students were encouraged to link theory with their place of employment and students were engaged in the session and contributed to debates and discussions. All staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the learning process and the team considers that they are knowledgeable, confident in their use of the learning environment and deliver lessons to the appropriate level. The student submission concludes that 'students are particularly happy with the College because of the quality of learning and the professionalism of lecturers as well as the admin staff'. From its observations of teaching and learning, the review team concludes that academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience.

## **Conclusions**

180 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

181 The College has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Through its staffing structure, Learning and Teaching Policy, Staff Development Policy and CPD the College has evidenced that it has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. Staff CVs and observations of teaching and learning indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Staff are supported by ongoing staff engagement with CPD. Internal and external feedback from students on the quality of their learning experience evidence that students tend to agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

182 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q4 The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience**

184 This Core practice expects that the provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

185 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

186 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- b Digital resources development plan
- c Student Clinic photo
- d Facility development plans - proposal
- e Facility development plans - schedule
- f Facility development plans - drawings
- g Facility development plans - drawings
- h Facility development plans - drawings
- i Facility development plans - drawings
- j British Dyslexia Association training slides
- k Safeguarding Policy
- l Student Literacy Support Guide for Staff
- m Student Welfare Support Guide
- n Disabled Student Allowance Handout
- o Computer Access Policy
- p Pastoral Care Policy
- q Annual Resource Budget
- r VLE minimum requirement guidelines
- s Strategic Development Plan 2019 2024 v7 draft
- t Minutes of Programme Team Meetings
- u Minutes of Academic Board meetings
- v Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) minutes
- w BTEC Annual Student Survey 2018 and 2019
- x National Student Survey Results
- y Internal Student Survey Results
- z Minutes of Student-Staff Liaison Committees
- aa Annual Programme Monitoring reports
- bb Full Accreditation of City College of Acupuncture City College of Acupuncture Resolution 2016

cc	Response from the College's accrediting body, the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB)
dd	Centre Annual Programme Monitoring Report (example)
ee	Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2016-17
ff	Lesson Observations
gg	Tour of resources
hh	Academic Management Report (AMR) by Pearson (example)
ii	Acupuncture external examiner's report August 2019
jj	Staffing Structure Chart
kk	Acupuncture Admin Job Description - KLD
ll	Job Description - Welfare Officer Student Loan Officer Head of Admissions
mm	Job Description IT Support
nn	CV
oo	CV
pp	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) agenda (example)
qq	CPD training slides 01 October 2019 (example)
rr	HND Bus EE Report RQF 18-19
ss	HND Hospitality Management and, Travel and Tourism External Examiners Report
tt	Student Submission
uu	Meeting with senior staff
vv	Meetings with students
ww	Meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

187 To identify students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services, the team examined a comprehensive range of surveys which included the National Student Survey (NSS), and the BTEC Higher National Student Survey. The team also sampled three student evaluation forms from three programmes at random as a comparison with the external surveys (nine in total): the Year 1 Acupuncture (three students), the HND Business (Unit 3, Human Resource Management) and HND Health and Social Care (Unit 13 Managing Human Resources).

188 To determine whether the roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience, the review team examined a representative sample of 21 CVs and five job descriptions for teaching and professional support staff.

189 To assess students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services, the review team met a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

190 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

191 To identify how the College's facilities, learning resources and support services contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience and to assess whether the College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that it has sufficient and appropriate facilities, resources or services to deliver a high-quality learning experience, the team considered the College's Strategic Development Plan and Annual Resource Budget,

policies, Development plans, and Academic Board minutes and Programme Team Meeting minutes for the provision of learning facilities, learning resources and student support services.

192 To assess whether the College has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience, the team reviewed the Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and records of academic deliberative committees at which resourcing matters were discussed, for example the Academic Board, the Student Staff Liaison Committee, Higher National Business programme team minutes, Diploma in Education and Training programme team minutes, Higher National Hospitality and Travel and Tourism programme team minutes and the Higher National Health and Social Care programme team minutes.

193 To identify other organisations' and professionals' views regarding facilities, learning resources and student support services, the team reviewed feedback and observations from the College's accrediting body, BAAB, from the awarding organisation for its Higher National provision, Pearson, and from external examiners of its taught provision.

194 In order to determine whether roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience, the team reviewed the College's organisational structures, job roles, job descriptions, student support policies, CVs and development activities of staff in professional support roles.

195 The team undertook a direct assessment of the facilities, learning resources and services under assessment to test that they are appropriate to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

196 The team had meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff to test whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled and understand their roles and responsibilities.

197 To identify students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services, the review team considered what had been expressed through the student submission, internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations, records of Student-Staff Liaison Committee minutes and through programme annual monitoring reports.

### **What the evidence shows**

198 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

199 The College's Strategic Development Plan claims that 'resources are fit for purpose' and provide an effective inclusive learning environment and that it intends to 'invest in tangible and digital resources' as necessary to achieve this aim. The Plan provides a brief analysis of the sector, identifying a number of challenges, and identifying realistic opportunities which could assure sustainable operation. Resource matters are routinely considered in Programme Team meetings and at Academic Board. Records of meetings demonstrate that shortcomings are considered, and the subsequent action reported back to Programme Team meetings and the Academic Board. Policies and procedures, for example minimum VLE requirements, for non-academic student support are fit for purpose and well-signposted to students on the College VLE. The College's Strategic Development Plan refers to a costed and budgeted refurbishment which includes the installation of a lift to provide access to the higher levels for students and staff with disabilities. The College states that the planned refurbishment will double the size of the teaching and clinic spaces, significantly improving the learning environment as increasing numbers of students work through the Licentiate. The team's detailed scrutiny of the plans and discussions with the leadership team led the team to conclude that the plans are realistic, credible, robust and



evidence-based and would bring improvements to an already sufficient and appropriate learning environment, to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

200 Programme Leaders and Heads of Department submit annual resource bids, and resource and staff training needs identified through the SSLC through Programme Team meetings, and in their Annual Programme Monitoring Reports are generally swiftly addressed, and this is confirmed in the Student Submission and by senior, academic and support staff and students. Examples of in-year spend include training for staff to support dyslexic students; investment in new beds for acupuncture as detailed in Academic Board minutes; continued investment in the library, as detailed in Programme Team minutes, Academic Board minutes and the relevant Annual Programme Monitoring Report; videos filmed for anatomy teaching and development of an associated video channel for teaching; improved Wi-Fi connectivity, as noted in the Academic Board minutes; and the provision of additional computers as noted in the Annual Programme Monitoring Reports. The introduction of a VLE, a discussion board for teaching, and online assignment submission has been widely welcomed as indicated in the Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and the Acupuncture External Examiner Report. The team formed the view that the College plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students.

201 The College occupies a spacious building in central London. It currently makes use of three floors, the fourth floor is currently an unused open space, and is available for expansion, although this would require significant investment. Each floor provides some 4,000 square feet of accommodation. The first, second and third floors provide mixed teaching, office and administrative spaces. Teaching spaces are all equipped with desks and chairs or with notepad armchairs. There are two well-proportioned IT suites providing in excess of 40 desktop PCs. All have internet access, and the classrooms have whiteboards, flipcharts, data projection and staff internet-connected computers. There are a number of small tutorial/seminar rooms, a conference room and a common room, all available for group-based and social activities.

202 The library is small, equipped with reference copies of core texts. Students and staff report a responsive book procurement process, confirmed in the Centre Annual Monitoring Report, the SSLC minutes, the Student Submission, the Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form, and the Annual Programme Monitoring Reports. Observation of teaching noted students having classroom access to online scientific journal databases. Pearson students have access to Higher National Global, Pearson's online learning resources.

203 Practical acupuncture teaching and assessment takes place in suitable clinical facilities, providing adequate privacy. The clinic is stocked with the necessary consumables, licenced by the local Council and also inspected on an annual basis by the external examiners and an external clinical auditor.

204 The environment is generally bright and welcoming and is carpeted throughout. A number of teaching rooms have air conditioning. There is a large student common room with IT facilities, facilities for students to make refreshments, and comfortable chairs for relaxation. The VLE provides a sound communication medium for the College, and signposts to a wealth of policy and support documentation as well as providing access to module learning materials.

205 The VLE and associated plagiarism-detection software provide the vehicle for both issuing teaching material and for assessment submission. This is confirmed by senior, academic and professional support staff, and students, in the student submission, and by reference to the VLE minimum requirement guidelines, the Acupuncture Annual Monitoring

Audit, and the Annual Programme Monitoring Reports for Pearson programmes. Students have access to printing, copying and scanning facilities and can access the College any time during normal office hours, although not during the weekend and evenings. External examiners comment that physical resources are acceptable.

206 The review team formed the view that facilities and learning resources provide a high-quality learning experience with sufficient capacity for current and planned student numbers.

207 The support services are coordinated by the Student Welfare, Finance and Admissions Officer underpinned by appropriate policies, for example the Pastoral Care Policy. The study skills programme is accessed by most students as detailed in Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and confirmed in discussions with students and senior, academic and professional support staff. Personal one-to-one support tutorials, pastoral support and assistance, counselling, liaison with social services, support and advice concerning student finance, and access to specialist learning support are accessed by individuals as needed. Administrative support staff are available to programme teams and provide one-stop-shop signposting for students, which is confirmed in discussion with students. The small team of qualified and experienced support staff who receive training according to their role are accessible to students.

208 Job descriptions for support roles are appropriate and for administrative roles include that staff are the first point of contact for students and facilitate liaison between students and other departments, such as Student Welfare, and support student induction. The job description for the Student Welfare, Finance and Admissions Officer include that the role incorporates specific induction, welfare, finance and admission responsibilities and also the monitoring of attendance. The officer is responsible for advising students on Disabled Students' Allowance, arranging assessments and supporting students as required. They will also advise students with health issues, specific learning needs or other needs and liaise between students and staff as necessary, recommending reasonable adjustments and setting up individual support as necessary. CVs demonstrate that administrative and IT support staff have appropriate experience. Other CVs, including that of the Student Welfare, Finance and Admissions Officer, demonstrate the acquisition of appropriate experience and ongoing relevant CPD. The review team concludes that relevant staff understand their roles and are appropriately qualified and skilled.

209 Learning facilities are confirmed as being suitable and fit for purpose in both Pearson's most recent Academic Management Review and in the most recent professional accreditation of the acupuncture programme. External examiners for both acupuncture and Person programmes report that resources are good. The BAAB accreditation report observed that practical facilities are both well-designed and flexible, and the one minor recommendation, suggesting an updating of both hard copy and online library resources, has been addressed. The review team formed the view that third parties confirm that facilities and learning resources are sufficient and appropriate.

210 Students report, through the student submission, in Programme Team meetings, Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, internal surveys, external surveys and in discussions with the review team, that resources are appropriate and of good quality. They describe swift remedial action whenever resource or student training needs are identified through SSLC and Programme Team Meetings and subsequent Annual Programme Monitoring Reports. In particular, the book procurement process was responsive whenever new texts or journals were requested. For example, the acupuncture library stock has doubled over the last five years. This is confirmed through speaking to students and academic staff, an external examiners report, and the student submission. Students speak highly of the range of support available outside formal teaching. The review team concludes

that students tend to regard facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate to facilitate a high-quality academic experience.

## **Conclusions**

211 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

212 The review team concludes that the College has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The review team found that, through the implementation of the College's Strategic Development Plan and consideration of resourcing through its deliberative committee structure, the College's plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes to students. The team's own assessment of the facilities and learning resources determined that the College provides a high-quality learning experience with sufficient capacity for current and planned student numbers. Staff understand their roles and are appropriately skilled and supported. The accrediting body, BAAB, confirms that facilities and learning resources are sufficient and appropriate, and students tend to regard facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate to facilitate a high-quality academic experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

213 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## Q5 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience

215 This Core practice expects that the provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

216 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the team considered

217 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Student Engagement Policy
- b General Student Handbook
- c Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2016-17
- d Annual Programme Monitoring Report RQF BUS 2016-17
- e Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HSC 2016-17
- f Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HMT and TTM 2016-17
- g Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2017-18
- h Annual Programme Monitoring Report RQF BUS 2017-18
- i Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HSC 2017-18
- j Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HMT and TTM 2017-18
- k Annual Programme Monitoring Report DET 2017-18
- l HND Bus EE Report RQF 18-19
- m HND Hospitality Management and, Travel and Tourism External Examiners Report
- n Learning and Teaching Policy
- o Enhancement Policy (draft)
- p Work Experience and Placement Policy
- q Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) minutes
- r Business Programme Team minutes
- s Diploma in Education and Training Programme Team Meeting minutes
- t Hospitality and Travel and Tourism Programme Team Meeting minutes
- u Health and Social Care Programme Team Meeting minutes
- v Joint HND Programme Team Meeting Minutes
- w Acupuncture Programme Team Meeting minutes
- x BTEC Higher National Student Survey
- y Internal Survey Results
- z National Student Survey
- aa Course and module evaluations
- bb Student Submission
- cc Meeting with senior staff
- dd Meetings with students

## **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

218 To identify students' views about student engagement in the quality of their educational experience, the team examined a comprehensive range of surveys which included the National Student Survey (NSS), and the BTEC Higher National Student Survey. The team also sampled three student evaluation forms from three programmes at random as a comparison with the external surveys (nine in total): the Year 1 Acupuncture (three students), the HND Business (Unit 3, Human Resource Management) and HND Health and Social Care (Unit 13 Managing Human Resources).

219 To assess whether students consider that they are engaged in the quality of their educational experience, the review team met a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

220 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

221 To identify how the College actively engages students in the quality of their educational experience, and to assess whether the College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for engaging students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience, the team examined the Student Engagement Policy, the Student Handbook, the Learning and Teaching Policy and the Enhancement Policy and, in respect of Pearson programmes, the Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and for the Licentiate in Acupuncture, the Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audits.

222 To illustrate the impact of the College's approach, the team examined the Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) minutes and programme team minutes across the HND programmes, the Diploma in Education and Training programme and the Licentiate in Acupuncture.

223 To identify whether the College has a clear and effective approach to engaging students in the quality of their educational experience, the team held meetings with staff, students and student representatives from across the College's different programmes.

## **What the evidence shows**

224 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

225 The College plans for actively engaging students in the quality of their educational experience are set out in the Student Engagement Policy. The Student Engagement Policy operationalises these plans with a list of engagement mechanisms that for collective engagement include: a system of student representatives with one student per cohort; representation on committees at all levels, including in Programme Team meetings; the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) and Board of Governors. Individual engagement mechanisms include end-of-semester evaluations, personal and group tutorials, mid and end-of-year reviews, student surveys and an open-door policy. The student submission confirms that student representatives are included in the College's deliberative committees and represent students on the SSLC, Academic Board and the Board of Governors. It confirms that individual mechanisms to provide feedback include the NSS and BTEC annual

surveys, Unit Evaluations, a suggestion box that is checked by the Principal, and VLE pages where students can ask questions. The review team formed the view that the College has a clear and effective approach to engaging students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience.

226 The College's Higher National Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, include a section on both student feedback and student engagement. In respect to student feedback, an analysis of the feedback is given and the actions arising as a result of the analysis are noted with the subsequent outcome reported. The reports give examples of the College changing and improving students' learning as a result of student engagement, including, for example, the additional support provided by 'blended learning' using SHOWBIE, a free educational app for teachers and students, in providing personalised information and resources with a direct link to tutor and a discussion. In respect of student engagement, some reports note the crucial role played by the student representatives in student engagement activities, including taking part in Programme Team meetings and meeting with external examiners. Similarly, the latest report for the DET programme includes actions taken as a result of student feedback but does not include a supporting analysis. Comment on student engagement includes student attendance at Programme Team Meetings and the Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings. External examiner reports note that there is evidence that student feedback is analysed and discussed at Programme Team meetings and that student representative meetings were addressing such issues as student feedback, poor Wi-Fi signal and the increased access to City Business Library.

227 For Pearson programmes, Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings are held to provide a forum for students to raise concerns through their student representatives. The minutes of these meetings show clear agenda items, action points and timescales for completing the action points. Completion of action points is followed up in matters arising at subsequent meetings. In the programme team meetings for all of the HND courses there is an agenda item for student representatives' feedback. There is also discussion on how to raise feedback levels, particularly from less engaged students. The Licentiate Course in Acupuncture has a twice-yearly Student-Staff Liaison Committee meeting, which includes student representatives from each year of the programme. Minutes from the meetings show an appropriate agenda and action points.

228 For students on workplace placements there is a requirement to make provision for students to raise issues of concern, including health and safety, to College staff as detailed in the Work Experience and Placement Policy. The Learning and Teaching Policy states that learning sessions at the College will use findings from student feedback to improve planning and delivery, and this is confirmed by students. From the evidence set out above, the review team forms the view that the College has robust and credible plans through a range of mechanisms to actively engage students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience.

229 Responses to external surveys confirm that students consider that the College is responsive to their feedback. In the 2019 Annual BTEC Higher National Student Survey students stated that they consider their opinions about course improvements will be listened to and acted on, with the majority agreeing with this statement in 2018. For the National Student Survey, most students in 2019 and 2018 agree with the statement that 'Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.' Most students agree with the statement 'It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on' from the 2018 and 2019 NSS survey. Changes and improvements following student feedback in these surveys cover course delivery and resources to support teaching and learning. Based on these findings, the team confirms that, as a result of student engagement, the College changes and improves students' learning experience.

230 End-of-unit evaluations are collected electronically and collated by the College for HND courses. Response rates for the April-July 2019 ranged from 9.4% (Diploma in Education and Training) to 75% (Social and Community Work) with an average of 36.1%. The College acknowledges that this is a low completion rate and it questions the efficacy of this mechanism for collecting information from students about the quality of their educational experience. However, the College is aware of this and is taking action to encourage and motivate students to complete them as a supervised activity in class. For the Acupuncture programme, the end-of-module surveys are completed in hard copy and appropriate action is taken.

231 With regard to the HND courses, senior staff state that action points with regards to student experience are followed up immediately, and that actions would appear on matters arising for the next meeting. Staff confirm that they have a full complement of students for the Student Staff Liaison Committee. Academic staff confirmed that they are aware of the low completion rates for internal surveys and are now allocating time in lessons for completion of evaluation forms. Staff and students confirmed that the feedback loop is closed through You said, We did pages on the VLE. Senior staff confirmed that the College also has plans in place, through its Enhancement Policy, to develop the student voice and improve feedback from students on the quality of teaching and learning on their programme on behalf of peers.

232 The team met students who stated that they are able to give feedback after every module. They were able to give examples of when the College had acted on the feedback they had provided, including quicker allocation of personal tutors and changes to module delivery. Students stated that they feel that the College listens to them and acts on their feedback elicited from formal and informal mechanism. They stated that they either give feedback through the open-door policy, or through module and course evaluation surveys. The review team formed the view that students consider they are engaged in the quality of their learning experience.

## **Conclusions**

233 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

234 The review team concludes that the College actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because the College has a clear and effective approach to engaging students as set out in the Student Engagement Policy. Students in meetings report that they feel engaged in the quality of their learning experience and are able to provide feedback. This is confirmed through external surveys where students express satisfaction with student engagement. Low completion rates for internal surveys question the efficacy of this mechanism for collecting student feedback. This has been acknowledged by senior staff who confirm that action is being taken to address this issue. The team saw evidence of changes made to provision based on student feedback. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

235 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix, therefore the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q6 The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students**

237 This Core practice expects that the provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

238 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

239 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Complaints - Policy and Procedure
- b Academic Appeal Policy
- c General Student Handbook
- d Business Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- e HND Hospitality Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- f HND Health Care Practice Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- g HND International Travel and Tourism Management Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- h HND Social and Community Work Programme Handbook RQF Oct 19
- i HND Hospitality Management QCF Programme Handbook
- j HND Health and Social Care QCF Programme Handbook
- k HND Travel and Tourism Management QCF Programme Handbook
- l City College of Acupuncture (CCA) Course Handbook
- m HND Academic Appeal example
- n Complaint 1
- o Complaint 2
- p Student Submission
- q Meeting with students.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

240 The College reported that it had received only two complaints and one appeal over the last three years. Consequently, the review team reviewed both complaints from the initial student complaint through to completion of proceedings, and the appeal. This was to test that complaints and appeals sampled were dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

241 To identify students' views about the clarity and accessibility of the College's complaints and appeals procedures, the review team met a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years.



## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

242 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

243 To confirm that the College's processes for handling complaints and appeals are fair and transparent, the team reviewed the Complaints Policy and Procedure and the Academic Appeal Policy.

244 To assess whether information for potential and actual complainants and appellants is clear and accessible, the review team considered relevant student-facing documentation, including the General Student Handbook and approved course documentation, including programme handbooks.

245 The team examined relevant student-facing documentation, including the General Student Handbook and approved course documentation, including programme handbooks, to determine whether complaints and appeals processes are fair, transparent and accessible to students.

## **What the evidence shows**

246 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

247 The College has a policy and procedure for student complaints which includes a staged process for resolving complaints, with timescales at each stage and referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) as a final stage after the College has issued a Completion of Procedures letter. The Policy states that it is designed to ensure that the procedure is open, equal, fair and unbiased and that complaints are addressed at the earliest possible opportunity. It sets out the scope of the complaints policy and outlines who can make a complaint, the types of complaint that can be made, and describes issues that are outside of the complaints policy.

248 The first stage of the policy encourages informal resolution at a local level, raising the issue with either an individual member of staff, Programme Leader or group student representative who will raise the matter at a Programme Team meeting. The complaint should be raised no more than 10 working days after the issue arises and should be resolved no more than 10 working days after the issue was raised. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved or if early resolution is not appropriate the complainant should progress through stage two of the process, raise a formal complaint within 10 working days of the failed attempt at early resolution or within 30 calendar days of the origin of the concern and submit it to the College Admin Office who will acknowledge receipt within five working days. Initially, the complaint will be dealt with by the Principal and Director of Studies who will carry out appropriate investigations into the complaint, which will involve meeting with the complainant, and who will communicate the outcome of the initial evaluation within 10 working days. The Principal and Director of Studies will produce a report setting out their conclusions and the reasons for them. This report will be made available to the complainant and Academic Board. Should the complainant be unhappy with the outcome of the formal complaint stage it is possible through stage three, the appeal stage, to request a review which must be made within 10 working days of the dispatch of the Formal Complaint Report and, if deemed eligible, the procedure decided upon for the review should be communicated within 10 working days and the outcome of the review communicated within 30 calendar

days. At this point, should the complainant remain dissatisfied on receipt of a Completion of Procedures letter, they have the option of submitting their complaint to the OIA. The Policy includes that the College will keep formal records of complaints and their outcomes. The College also keeps an anonymised record of informal complaints.

249 The College's appeals process includes three internal and one external stage. For HND students, the external stage is referral to the awarding body (Pearson) or ultimately to the OIA if they have a complaint about an academic appeal. For the Licentiate in Acupuncture, the external stage is referral to the OIA if they have a complaint about the outcome of an appeal. Under stage one, a student must register their intention to appeal within five working days after the assignment grade has been sent. The assessor concerned will, within five working days, write a response based on the evidence and return it to the student. If, at this point, the appeal is not resolved the student can, within five working days of receiving the assessor's response, complete and submit a stage two form to the Admin Office who will pass the form and a hard copy of the original assessment along with a hard copy of the grading form to the appropriate internal verifier. The internal verifier will again respond within five working days. At this point, if the matter remains unresolved, the student can move to stage three where all documentation will be passed to the Appeals Panel to consider the appeal and, if appropriate, set a date for a Hearing. If the matter is still not resolved it will be referred, in the case of Higher National programmes, to Pearson and ultimately to the OIA. The review team formed the view that the College's procedure for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent and will deliver timely outcomes.

250 Information for students about complaints and academic appeals is found in the Complaints - Policy and Procedure the Academic Appeal Policy and the student handbook. Information about academic appeals and complaints, including the policies and relevant forms, are easily available to all students on the College website. The team examined a representative sample of Programme Handbooks which also outline the College's process for making complaints and appeals.

251 Students are aware that there is a complaint and appeal procedure and that there is a form available on the College intranet for this. They are also aware that information on complaints and appeals is published in the programme handbooks, is on the VLE and on the College website; however, none of them had made an appeal or complaint. The student submission notes that students are informed about the complaints and appeal procedures at induction and that both are easily accessed through the VLE. The team formed the view that students agree that the College complaints and appeals processes are clear and accessible and that the College's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are accessible to students; that is, students can find and understand those procedures quickly and easily.

252 Documentation was provided from two complaints. Correspondence from the College for both of the complaints clearly outlined the stages of the complaints process, including the right of a complainant to attend the complaints meeting with a friend or representative, and the right to appeal the decision by requesting a review. Both complaints were responded to within 10 working days, consistent with the College complaints process. The review team concludes that the complaints are addressed in a fair, transparent and timely way, which was consistent with the College's complaints policy.

253 The one academic appeal received over the past three years was resolved at stage one. The correspondence for the appeal clearly outlined the stages of the appeal process and was responded to according to the timescales set out in the College Appeals Policy. The review team concludes that this appeal was processed in a fair and timely way.

254 Staff are required to read and understand the complaints policy and procedure as part of their induction. These processes are fair and transparent, because all students have equal access to them, they are treated equally according to the policy, and they align with the good practice guidelines from OIA.

## **Conclusions**

255 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

256 The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals that are accessible to all students. This is because the College's procedures for handling complaints are definitive, fair and transparent and deliver timely outcomes. The procedures are accessible to students in programme handbooks, on the VLE and on the College website. Students do not raise any serious concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures or their application. Complaints reviewed by the team had been dealt with according to the College procedure and regulations, including in relation to internal and external appeals referral and adherence to specified timescales. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

257 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

260 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

261 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Annual Programme Monitoring Report RQF BUS 2016-17
- b Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HSC 2016-17
- c Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HMT and TTM 2016-17
- d Annual Programme Monitoring Report RQF BUS 2017-18
- e Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HSC 2017-18
- f Annual Programme Monitoring Report QCF HMT and TTM 2017-18
- g Annual Programme Monitoring Report DET 2017-18
- h Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2017-18
- i Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Audit Form 2016-17
- j External Examiner Report Acupuncture 2016/17
- k External Examiner Report Acupuncture 2017/18
- l External Examiner Report Acupuncture 2018/19
- m HND Bus EE Report RQF 18-19
- n HND HMT+TTM EE Report A QCF 18-19
- o BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2015-16
- p BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2016-17
- q BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form and Report 2017-18
- r BAAB AC Response to your Report dated 7th of August 2018
- s MoU between the College and a work placement provider
- t Work Experience and Placement policy
- u Employers' Forum minutes
- v Communications between College and employers
- w Briefing and induction materials for workplace supervisors and mentors
- x Samples of student portfolios developed during their work placement, together with other work in which experiences from work placements are assessed
- y Programme and module handbooks relating to the sample of student work-based portfolios
- z Student number data

- aa Annual programme monitoring reports for programmes within which work placement learning takes place
- bb External examiner reports
- cc Records of programme team meetings
- dd Meeting with senior staff
- ee Meeting with students
- ff Meeting with employers
- gg Meeting with and academic and professional support staff

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

262 To test that external examiners consider courses delivered in partnership to be of high quality, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements, the review team selected a representative sample of external examiner reports from the last two years for Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care and Hospitality and Business and the latest year of the Licentiate in Acupuncture. The team also looked at the external report resulting from Pearson's annual monitoring process. The sample covered all programmes from which student assessed work was scrutinised.

263 To assess students' views about the quality of courses delivered in partnership, the review team met a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

264 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

265 To test the basis for the maintenance of high quality within the partnerships, and that those arrangements are in line with the College's regulations or policies. The review team examined the College's relationship with its awarding organisation and accrediting body through a range of documentation, including:

- a. For Pearson programmes: the Centre Annual Programme Monitoring Report, the Academic Management Report (AMR), the Health and Social Care Unit 16 Pearson Checking Service Oct 2019, Higher National Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, and DET Annual Programme Monitoring Report.
- b. For the Licentiateship in Acupuncture: the City College Acupuncture specification (SETA 1), Acupuncture Annual Monitoring Reports, the BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2015-16, and the Full Accreditation of City College Acupuncture Resolution 2016.

266 To assess how the College ensures courses are high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them, the team examined memoranda of understanding between the College and placement providers, briefing materials for placement providers and relevant student handbooks for those programmes with placements and the Work Experience and Placement policy.

267 To test whether staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding organisation, the team met with four senior staff, including the Managing

Director and Principal, three programme leaders, three teachers, two support staff and a representative from BAAB.

268 To assess students' views about the quality of courses delivered in partnership, the team held meetings with students and reviewed the BTEC Higher National Student Survey 18-19.

### **What the evidence shows**

269 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

270 The College works with Pearson as its awarding organisation and with BAAB as its accrediting organisation for the programmes that it delivers. These are a range of HNC and HND programmes and the Diploma in Education and Training which are awarded by Pearson, and the Licentiate in Acupuncture which is accredited by the BAAB and awarded by the College.

271 Pearson's General Regulations for Approved Centres set out clear guidelines for the partnership between providers and Pearson. The regulations are clear and ensure that staff from the College understand their responsibilities for quality. External examiners' reports, Academic Management Review Reports and the College's internal APMRs demonstrate that the College engages with those requirements. External examiners report that the College meets Pearson requirements diligently and thoroughly. APMRs include external examiner comments and consideration of College responses. The APMRs also show detailed consideration of the College's responsibilities in respect of quality, including that of student support; student engagement; learning and teaching; and resources.

272 The review team examined a range of operational documentary evidence, for example, the FHEQ-SETA mapping, the CCA specification (SETA 1), the BAAB AC Response to the Annual Monitoring Form 2015-16, the BAAB AC Response to your Report 2018 and the Full Accreditation of City College of Acupuncture Resolution 2016.

273 The Full Accreditation of City College Acupuncture Resolution 2016 confirms that the College meets the requirements of full accreditation and that the programme meets BAAB's Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture Programmes (SETAPs).

274 From examination of these documents and discussions on their effective operation with senior staff, teaching and professional support staff and students, the review team concludes that the College has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring a high-quality academic experience in partnership work.

275 The College's arrangements and approach to workplace learning are captured in its Work Placement and Experience Policy, which is approved and updated regularly by the Academic Board. The Policy commits the College to ensuring that the delivery partners providing work placements fully understand their role in providing an appropriate learning opportunity in a work environment. The responsibilities of both College and delivery partner are clearly defined, and the agreement to work together to provide placement and support for students is captured in a formal signed memorandum of understanding (MoU).

276 The College is growing its network of delivery partners and has established an Employers' Forum to engender two-way communication with them, including those with whom work experience is arranged. The Forum and other networks also provide a source of external professional expertise on which the College is able to draw for visiting lecturers, and for programme approval and periodic review exercises as detailed in the relevant programme team minutes.

277 Formal responsibility for provision of an appropriate and safe workplace learning environment lies with the placement employer/delivery partner, and the College defines its expectations within the Work Placement and Experience Policy and MoU. Workplace mentors receive a specific detailed briefing on the programme the student is following and their role and responsibilities, so that they understand the context of the placement, for example for the Diploma in Education and Training, Health and Social Care and Social and Community Work. The use of these policies and procedures was confirmed in discussion with senior staff, teaching and professional support staff and employers.

278 The College maintains an active relationship with the employer throughout all placement activities, through comprehensive initial briefings and subsequently keeping in touch with both student and workplace supervisor/mentor through visits, email and telephone conversations, as confirmed by staff, students and employers. Students who have undertaken placements speak highly of the experience, in particular highlighting how it had the potential to transform their careers through gaining a better understanding of the workplace environment. In all cases, employer mentors oversee the work experience, providing witness testimonies and, in the case of Diploma in Education and Training students, also conducting formative feedback on teaching exercises.

279 The College has only two programmes in which work placement learning leads to the award of academic credit, one leading to a BTEC Higher National Certificate/Diploma in Health and Social Care (HND HSC), the other leading to a BTEC Level 5 professional Diploma in Education and Teaching (DET). HND HSC students join the course on release or leave from their employer, and thus already have suitable work placements. DET students are training for employment as teachers or lecturers and are required to find suitable training placements, as confirmed by senior staff, academic and professional support staff, students and employers. Samples of student reflective portfolios confirm the views of students, their mentors, staff and external examiners, all of whom attest to the quality of the work experience in contributing to the high-quality academic experience in partnership work.

280 Employers and College staff confirm the comprehensive and thorough briefings on the placement processes and their role in it, at the conclusion of which the MoU is signed. Employers speak positively about the quality of contribution made by, and the commitment of, placement students, confirming the conclusions made by the review team from its scrutiny of students' reflective portfolios and reports from external examiners. Students enthusiastically confirm the positive value of the workplace experience.

## **Conclusions**

281 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

282 When working in partnership with other organisations, the College has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. The College works effectively with its awarding and accrediting partners through thorough and well thought out policies and procedures and a good working relationship between the College and its partners through credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring a high-quality academic experience and the awarding and accrediting partners are meeting their responsibilities. The team's analysis of the evidence demonstrates that, although the College's work with workplace partners forms only a small proportion of its provision, care is taken to assure the

quality of workplace learning opportunities. Relationships with workplace providers are governed by a comprehensive Work Placement and Experience Policy and captured in a clear memorandum of understanding. The College approves and retains firm oversight of each placement, briefing supervisors and mentors before placements begin, and subsequently maintaining regular engagement with both employers and students throughout the placement. The College has clear and comprehensive policies in place for the management of partnerships with other organisations, to ensure that the academic experience is high quality. Staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body. External examiners consider courses delivered in partnership to be of high quality, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements. Students and employers confirm the value of the placement experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

283 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix in Annex 4. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.



## Q9 The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes

285 This Core practice expects that the provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

286 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the team considered

287 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the College could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Pastoral Care Policy
- b Safeguarding Policy
- c Student Literacy Support Guide for Staff
- d Student Welfare Support Guide
- e Disabled Students Handout - Induction
- f Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy
- g Computer Access Policy
- h Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- i Dyslexia in Higher Education training slides
- j Student Recruitment & Admissions Policy
- k Job Description - Welfare Officer Student Loan Officer Head of Admissions
- l Student Welfare Pages
- m Case Study Example of Communication between school and The City College
- n Employers' Forum invitation
- o General Student Handbook
- p Learning Agreement
- q Programme Team Meeting Minutes
- r Lesson observations
- s Staff Development Policy
- t BTEC Annual Student Survey 2018 and 2019
- u National Student Survey
- v External Examiner Reports
- w Standardisation Meeting minutes (example)
- x Unit 7 Business Law Pearson Checking Service report Oct 19 (example)
- y Enhancement Policy (draft)
- z Assessed Student Work
- aa Internal Verification Policy
- bb Ethnic background of students 2018-19
- cc Equality and Diversity Policy
- dd Reasonable Adjustment List 19-20
- ee Access and Participation Statement
- ff Student submission

- gg Meeting with senior staff
- hh Meeting with students
- ii Meeting with employers
- jj Meeting with academic and professional support staff

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

288 To assess students' views about student support mechanisms and to assess whether students who have made particular use of student support services regard those services as accessible and effective, the review team met a sample of 12 students from across all programmes and years.

289 To test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback, the review team examined a random and representative sample of assessed student work across all programmes and levels. The samples were taken from four programmes, comprising 96 pieces of assessed work and feedback drawn from 20 modules. The sample included work from Levels 4, 5 and 6, embracing a range of assessment methods, including written and practical examinations, case studies, role-playing scenarios, dissertations, project reports, presentations, reflective essays and work placement coursework portfolios, ensuring that the only Level 6 programme (acupuncture) and a programme which had placement learning was included. The sample included the full range of student marks.

290 To identify students' views about student support mechanisms, the team examined a comprehensive range of surveys which included the National Student Survey (NSS), and the BTEC Higher National Student Survey. The team also sampled three student evaluation forms from three programmes at random as a comparison with the external surveys (nine in total): the Year 1 Acupuncture (three students), the HND Business (Unit 3, Human Resource Management) and HND Health and Social Care (Unit 13 Managing Human Resources).

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

291 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the College was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding the College's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

292 To identify the College's approach to student support and to assess whether that approach is credible, robust and evidence-based for ensuring all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes, the team examined the College's policies, student-facing documentation, records and training relating to student support, including the Pastoral Care Policy; Safeguarding Policy, Student Literacy Support Guide for Staff, Student Welfare Support Guide, Disabled Student Allowance Handout, Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Reasonable Adjustment List 19-20, Computer Access Policy, Extenuating Circumstances Policy, Access and Participation Statement, Ethnic background of students 2018-19 and CPD training day by the British Dyslexia Association.

293 To test whether, in practice, the College supports students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes through offering professional development opportunities, the team reviewed evidence of professional involvement.

294 To determine whether the College's plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes are comprehensive, robust and credible, the team examined the College's policies and procedures relating to student attendance. This

included student-facing documentation relating to attendance, for example information provided in the General Student Handbook and referred to in the Learning Agreement, and also mechanisms to monitor student attendance referred to in programme team minutes and observed in lesson observations carried out by the review team.

295 To assess students' views about student support mechanisms, the review team considered the BTEC Higher Nationals Annual Student Survey and National Student Survey. The team also considered external examiners' reports.

296 The team examined the College's plans for developing employability skills and career related opportunities in the Enhancement Policy, triangulating these plans with evidence from employers and students to determine how credible and robust the plans were.

297 The team undertook the observation of five lessons across the College's provision, at all levels to assess whether all students are supported to achieve successful academic outcomes through teaching provision.

298 To test whether staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported, the team considered the Staff Development Policy, the Internal Verification Policy and internal verification decisions made on the assessed students work and met with four senior staff, including the Managing Director and Principal, three programme leaders, three teachers, two support staff and a representative from the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB).

### **What the evidence shows**

299 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

300 The College has a range of policies and procedures to support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes, including the Pastoral Support Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Student Literacy Support Guide for Staff, Student Welfare Support Guide, Disabled Student Allowance Handout which is made available to students at induction, Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Computer Access Policy, Extenuating Circumstances Policy, Access and Participation Statement, Equality and Diversity Policy and an analysis of the ethnicity of students 2018-19. There is also a disabled students' policy specifically relating to the admissions process. Both the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and the Reasonable Adjustments Policy outline the processes and criteria to be followed without compromising the assessment process or assessment objectives.

301 Students' individual circumstances, that may affect their achievement, is followed up in practice through the Reasonable Adjustment List 19-20 and appropriate adjustments are made. The Student Literacy Support Guide for Staff, Pastoral Care Policy and Student Welfare Support Guide all outline the services that the College offers, for example, workshops on help with assignments, study skills, computer skills, requesting extra time for assessments, support for health and disability issues and signposting to local and national welfare organisations. The College has a designated welfare officer and welfare service. Students are told who the welfare officer is in the Student Handbook but not of the welfare service, although further information is given in the Student Welfare Support Guide. The College provides students with personal support to develop their study skills. Personal one-to-one support tutorials are available for pastoral support and assistance with preparing CVs, job applications, careers advice and interview techniques, support and advice concerning finance and support preparing university applications, as detailed in the Pastoral Care Policy, as well as being able to discuss academic matters with a view to improving outcomes. Students receive an induction at the beginning of the year on the pastoral and academic support available to them. The Student Literacy Support Guide for Staff sets out what staff can do to support students and what the College can put in place to support staff,

including arranging CPD from outside agencies. A recent example of this is that College staff attended CPD training delivered by the British Dyslexia Association to create more awareness on how to support students with dyslexia.

302 The College supports students seeking a work placement in their search, signposting, for example, Diploma in Education and Training students to teacher recruitment agencies, schools or colleges in the region, as confirmed by staff, students and employers. Following the identification of a prospective placement, College staff visit the employer to confirm the appropriateness of the work environment and to brief the supervisor and managers of the nature of the placement, the student's and College's obligations, and the division of responsibilities between the employer and the College. The College's proactive engagement with employers ensures that procedures for ensuring high-quality workplace learning remain effective. The review team formed the view that the College's plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes are comprehensive, robust and credible and that its approach to student support will facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes.

303 The College gave two examples of building relationships with employers to support successful professional outcomes. In August 2018, the College held a forum for employers who were supervising the College's HND students. Some of the aims of the forum were to understand the skills and knowledge that employers would like to see students/employees develop for their future employment; how the College might help employers; to share good practice; and offer new opportunities. In the second example an employer expresses thanks to a member of College staff for 'all the work you have done' to help a particular student pass their course.

304 Student attendance is monitored through registers taken at the beginning of lessons. The College Learning Agreement and General Student Handbook outlines clear expectations for student attendance. The HND Programme Team meetings refer to improving student attendance in the minutes. In the action points from the Business Programme Team meeting it is noted that a staff member has taken responsibility for improving attendance, including text messaging and closer monitoring of attendance. In addition, the minutes note that one-to-one meetings with students are taking place with personal action plans and direction to workshops to support attendance. There is a rolling agenda item for attendance in the Diploma in Education and Training Programme Team meetings and the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Programme Team meetings. The evidence shows that the College has a range of mechanisms by which to monitor student attendance, which helps students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

305 One strategic objective of the Enhancement Policy is to develop and enhance student's employability skills with career and work-related opportunities, including engagement with employers and mentor support. Under the Enhancement Policy the College states that it intends to maximise the use and participation of the Pearson Higher National Global Study Skills online course across all programmes to complete the online self-assessments linked to developing employability skills, including creating a CV. It will also involve employers in creating assessments at the College to ensure they are relevant and current. It further intends to use trainee teachers on the Pearson Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training to provide mentor support across all programmes. However, students state that, although they had accessed the Pearson Higher National Global Study Skills online course, they did not have access to mentor support. The employers that the team spoke to had not had any involvement in creating assessments.

306 Lesson observations show that students are engaged in their learning and that teaching staff build a good relationship with them. In one lesson where a student had additional requirements, the tutor explained the nature of the difficulties, how it impacted on

their studies, and the support that was being provided. Tutors linked the course materials to work-related examples and to current events, where applicable. There was a range of large group and small group work in several of the lessons observed. Taken as a whole, the lessons observed by the team demonstrate that the College supports its students to achieve successful academic outcomes through its teaching provision because the content covered by the tutors related to learning outcomes and curriculum, and students were engaged in their learning.

307 The policy relating to internal verification is comprehensive, sets out roles and responsibilities and offers clear guidelines, including on the quality of feedback. All assessment records sampled from the HND programmes included clear constructive feedback and action points. The team found that the quality of feedback to students on their assessed work was good because it related to specific grading criteria and was suitably annotated and constructive. Some of the feedback to HND students is not developmental. However, this was picked up by the internal verifier and subsequently acted on by the College. Assignments are submitted through Turnitin. Staff are supported to provide comprehensive and helpful feedback on assessed work to students through a robust and developmental internal verification process. Students state that feedback is very thorough, explains the reasons for grade and tells them how they can improve. The review team formed the view that assessed student work demonstrates that students are generally given comprehensive and helpful feedback.

308 Academic and professional support staff confirmed that they are appropriately skilled and supported through a development plan. CPD is mandatory and has included sessions on improving formative feedback to students, standardisation and internal verification processes to improve the quality of teaching and assessment; and peer observations to develop teaching through planning and observer feedback. The review team concludes that staff are appropriately skilled and supported.

309 The comments from students in response to national surveys are positive. Data collected from surveys demonstrates that students appreciate the support provided. HND students reported high levels of satisfaction with verbal and written feedback. However, external examiners stated that consistency and quality of feedback on marked work to students is variable. As a result, the College embarked on a detailed assessment standardisation exercise and has engaged with the BTEC assessment checking service. The evidence shows that students value the support provided by the College, and that the College responds to concerns raised by external examiners.

310 The student submission points to the large section of the student body that is made up of mature students who have been outside of education for a number of years and confirms that staff are always available to offer support and advice. Meetings with students indicated that they value the support provided by the College. Students with additional requirements (dyslexia) explained that the Welfare Officer offered support with dyslexia. However, this has not translated into adjustments during lessons, but relied on a subsequent session with the pastoral support officer. Students indicated that they are aware of the open-door policy for student support, and one student in the meeting had made use of it. The student submission notes that the open-door policy, which is maintained by both administration and academic staff, is held in high regard and that the College is helpful in intervening if students are not coping, thus avoiding escalation of issues. Students due to complete their programme are offered support in developing their CVs and job applications, developing job interview techniques, and preparing university applications. The evidence reflects that students value the support provided by the College and tend to agree that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

## Conclusions

311 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the College meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

312 The College supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The College value of 'where students come first' is transparent in the academic and pastoral support provided to students. This is because the College has a range of academic and welfare policies that are credible, robust and evidence-based for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The Pastoral Care Policy is supported by a designated Welfare Officer with responsibility for routine monitoring and support of students with additional requirements. Students who have accessed this support have found it helpful. However, the College does not routinely map student outcome and academic attainment or retention data against protected characteristics, with the exception of ethnicity. This means that the processes for monitoring and supporting all students to achieve successful and professional outcomes are not fully robust and credible. Despite this, students tend to agree that they are adequately supported by the College, and this is consistent with external survey results. and supported by a robust internal verification and monitoring process. Staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

313 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix, therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

**QAA2606 - R10979 - Jun 21**

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