

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

London Interdisciplinary School Ltd

Review Report

May 2020



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>From the evidence provided, the review team considers that the standards set for the School's programme are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. The evidence scrutinised by the team demonstrates that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are set appropriately.</p> <p>The review team considers that the standards that will be achieved by the School's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework, based on evidence provided as part of this review. The review team considers that the evidence seen demonstrates that the School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that these standards are maintained. The review team considers that staff fully understand the School's approach to maintaining these standards and are committed to implementing this approach. The review team concludes, therefore, 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>The review team, based on the evidence presented, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the School's programme are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The review team considers that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The review team determined that, based on the evidence seen, the standards that will be achieved by the School's students beyond the threshold are expected to be comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The team considers that the School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards beyond the threshold are maintained. Based on the detailed scrutiny of the evidence, the review team found that staff fully understand the School's approach to maintaining such standards and have opportunities for engagement with peers and external experts in teaching and assessment activities. The review team considers the School's plans for maintaining comparable standards beyond the threshold level appropriate, well documented and understood by staff members.</p> <p>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 and this Core practice is met..</p>
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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.			The School chose not to address this Core practice because it asserts that it does not work in partnership with other organisations.
S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High	The School uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. This is because it has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards. The processes for assessment and classification, as outlined in regulations and policies, are clear and comprehensive. Discussions with senior, academic and professional support staff demonstrated that assessment and classification procedures are well understood and likely to be effective when implemented. The plans for the use of external examiners and the consideration of reports are robust and credible because they are embedded within regulations, receive due oversight, and the staff who will operate these plans understand the requirements for the incorporation of external expertise. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High	The School has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because the School has a clear policy for the recruitment, selection and admission of students, taking account of academic attainment, individual circumstances and backgrounds as part of this policy, which is designed to be reliable, fair and inclusive. Its plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive are robust and credible. Academic and professional support staff involved in admissions understand their roles, which are clearly defined by the admissions policy. Training has been established to ensure that all staff involved in admissions are appropriately skilled, including compulsory training relating to inclusivity and admissions. The admissions information provided by the School to prospective students is transparent, fit for purpose and accessible. Further, admissions requirements in approved course documentation are consistent with the School's admissions policy. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	The School designs and has credible, robust and evidence-based plans to deliver high-quality courses. The School's academic regulations and policies facilitate this through being clear, comprehensive and thorough. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy articulates the School's underlying aims and purpose in designing and delivering its interdisciplinary provision and combines with the regulatory requirements to facilitate the design of a coherent programme and modules. Approved programme documentation, which is consistent with the regulations and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, indicates to the review team that the teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to meet and demonstrate the

				intended learning outcomes. Senior, academic and professional support staff who met with the team are able to articulate a good understanding of what 'high quality' means in the context of the School, and to show how the programme meets that definition. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	The School will have sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because the regulations and process by which staff are recruited, inducted and developed is fair, reliable and likely to result in the delivery of a high-quality academic experience. The staffing structures and roles defined by the School are appropriate for the delivery of its programme. The sufficiency of staffing levels is established on the basis of calculations that account for factors such as the average hours worked in a day, number of modules taught, expected administrative contributions, expected number of taught sessions and anticipated student numbers. The CVs and job descriptions reviewed indicate that the School has recruited appropriately skilled and qualified staff who have appropriate experience for the roles for which they have been employed. Based on the same faculty recruitment process that had led to a large majority of academic roles being filled by staff on permanent contracts, and the plans in place for future recruitment through to 2023-24, the School has robust and credible plans to fill outstanding roles and further develop its academic and professional support staff. 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	<p>The School has detailed and appropriate planning in place for the provision of sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because, while there is currently no contractual agreement regarding the use of a physical site, the School has comprehensive plans, oversight and documented progress towards identified milestones, the combination of which is likely to lead to the establishment of a facility before programme delivery begins. Further, the School has contingency plans to account for foreseeable circumstances, including the situation where a physical site is not secured according to schedule. The School has developed plans for the provision of learning resources, including affiliate membership of Jisc Collections and an agreement with Senate House to provide learning resources. This is in addition to existing implementations of a virtual learning environment and a student monitoring system. The School's student support services are enshrined in regulations and communicated in policies that address areas such as library access, careers, wellbeing, study support, disability support and personal tutoring. In addition, each area of student support is sufficiently resourced and operated by staff who understand their role is student support. The review team therefore concludes this Core practice is met.</p>
Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	<p>The School has a clear framework for actively engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. The School has clear and credible plans through its Student Engagement Framework that include strategies for engaging students to ensure a robust and effective approach to student engagement. Although it has yet to commence delivery,</p>

				<p>it has outlined mechanisms to ensure students can engage both individually and collectively in quality assurance through the student representative system and various feedback mechanisms including module surveys. While the School has yet to enrol students, there have already been examples of engagement with prospective students that have resulted in changes and improvements to the provision. Staff show a clear commitment to using student engagement to shape the learning experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p>
Q6	<p>The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p>	Met	High	<p>The School has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which will be accessible to all students. This is because the plans and procedures in relation to appeals and complaints are definitive, fair and transparent, with clear stages and timeframes. The School has credible and robust plans for monitoring and reporting on complaints and appeals received and a review of the complaints and appeals processes as well as ensuring that relevant information is accessible to students. Staff confirm that the training that they have received is appropriate. They demonstrated their understanding of the relevant policies and procedures and are aware of their role in these processes. Students will be able to find and understand these procedures quickly and easily. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>

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.			The School chose not to address this Core practice because it asserts that it does not work in partnership with other organisations.
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	The School has plans in place to support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The Student Support Framework is a comprehensive document that identifies the School's plans and approach to support students, which should facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes. The plans to support students include the allocation of skilled support staff, the provision of effective feedback and a variety of well-being and career-focused activities. These plans are comprehensive, robust and credible. Relevant staff are appropriately skilled and developed, understand their role and the information provided suggests support will be easily accessible to students. The review team agreed that, although there was significant emphasis on internships in information supplied to prospective students, support for them to achieve successful professional outcomes is not dependent on this scheme as the School provides a range of other appropriate activities. The review team concludes, therefore, that the School will support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that this Core practice is met.

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 May 2020, for the London Interdisciplinary School Ltd.

A Quality and Standards Review (QSR) is a method of review QAA uses to provide the 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 provider's 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: Dr Karen Willis

Institution: Independent

Role in review team: Subject reviewer: Education and Teaching, Combined and General Studies

Name: Mrs Sarah Mullins

Institution: DN College group

Role in review team: Institutional reviewer

Name: Dr Matthew Leeke

Institution: University of Warwick

Role in review team: Institutional reviewer

The QAA Officer for the review was Mr Damon Lane.

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 London Interdisciplinary School Ltd

The London Interdisciplinary School Ltd (the School) was registered with Companies House in November 2017, aiming to deliver a single three-year, full-time undergraduate Bachelor of Arts and Science (BASc) programme in Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods. The School asserts that the programme aims to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve in multiple interdisciplinary areas of complex problem-solving. The School is also seeking to obtain degree awarding powers for this award prior to September 2021. The School has no arrangements with an awarding body.

The School will be based in East London and has signed a letter of commitment for a preferred delivery site in preparation for launch in September 2021 with 120 students on the

flagship programme. Other non-accredited programmes, not in the scope of this review, will be offered in due course.

The activities of the School are overseen by its Board of Directors which has ceded the oversight, maintenance and continual improvement of academic quality and standards and all other academic authority to the School's Academic Council. The Executive Committee of the School, led by the Chief Executive, is responsible for management and operational issues.

At the time of the Quality Standards Review in May 2020, the School was an 'in-prospect' provided, still some 15 months away in its delivery cycle from enrolling its first cohort.

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 School 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). The School also do not plan to work with any partners as they are currently applying for degree awarding powers and the entire provision is planned to be delivered by the School. For this reason, the School chose not to address the Core practices of the Quality Code that are associated with working in partnership. Therefore the review team did not consider 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), or 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).

To form its judgements about the provider'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. The review visit was undertaken during May 2020 and, in line with guidance from government at the time, the review team and staff at the School were working from home. For this reason, the review visit meetings were conducted online. To ensure that the review team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence 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 normally sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this review it was not necessary to sample any of the documentary evidence provided as the School has yet to commence delivery and it is proposing to deliver a single undergraduate programme. Exhaustive consideration could therefore be given to all of the evidence submitted.

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, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 BAsC Programme Specification
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c BAsC Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix
- d LIS Programme Approval Process for BAsC
- e Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes 260220
- f Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) Outcome Note 260220
- g Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes 090320
- h Academic Council minutes 160320
- i Academic Council minutes 181219
- j Sample of Module Forms and Assessment Instruments
- k Programme Development Team (PDT) Response to PMRAP
- l Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- m Module Specification Level 6 Capstone Project
- n Module Specification Level 6 Stories and Campaigns
- o Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIa
- p Module Specification Level 5 Thinking Visually

q	Module Specification Level 4 Problems Ib
r	Module Specification Level 4 Qualitative Methods Ia
s	Module Specification Level 5 Investigating the Physical World
t	Written Reports and LIS Responses to External Scrutineers
u	PDT minutes of Subcommittee of Methods Area Leaders 110120
v	PDT minutes Curriculum Development Meeting 200120
w	Board of Directors minutes 181119
x	Module Specification Level 4 Problems Ic
y	Module Specification Level 4 Qualitative and Visual Methods Ia Communicating Visually and Verbally
z	Module Specification Level 4 Quantitative Methods Ib
aa	Module Specification Level 5 Design Thinking
bb	Module Specification Level 5 Ethics and Ethnographies
cc	Module Specification Level 5 Further Statistics and Probability
dd	Module Specification Level 5 Introduction to Data Engineering
ee	Module Specification Level 5 Investigating the Natural and Human World
ff	Module Specification Level 5 Mental Models and Superconcepts
gg	Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIb
hh	Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIc
ii	Module Specification Level 5 Telling the Story of a Wicked Problem
jj	Module Specification Level 6 Social Excavation
kk	Module Specification Level 6 Apparatus, Process and Subjective Methodologies in Photography and Videography
ll	Module Specification Level 6 Climate Change and Planetary Health
mm	Module Specification Level 6 Full Stack Web Development
nn	Module Specification Level 6 Further Data Engineering
oo	Module Specification Level 6 Global Citizenship
pp	Module Specification Level 6 Investigating the Natural and Human World 2
qq	Module Specification Level 6 Investigating the Physical World 2
rr	Module Specification Level 6 Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
ss	Module Specification Level 6 Podcasting and Power
tt	Module Specification Level 6 Skills for Sustainability
uu	Capstone Project: Programme Learning Outcomes Clarification
vv	Email Correspondence relating to programme structure
ww	Meeting with senior staff
xx	Meeting with academic staff.

5 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

6 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise external examiner reports, third party endorsements (such as PSRB reports) or assessed student work.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

7 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

8 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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

provider'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 The review team examined the Governance and Academic Regulations, Academic Council meeting minutes and minutes from a meeting of the Board of Directors, to identify the School'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 award, and to interrogate the robustness and credibility of the School's plans for ensuring threshold standards are maintained.

10 The review team scrutinised the BAsc Programme Specification, Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix, Module Forms and Assessment Instruments, and all module specifications from the School's programme to test that the specified threshold standards for the course are consistent with relevant national frameworks. The team also examined the School's overview of the programme approval process for the BAsc Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods, Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes and notes, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, the programme development team meeting (PDT) minutes and response to PMRAP, external scrutineers' written reports and the School's responses, and a clarification statement provided by the School during the review visit accompanied by further evidence clarifying programme structure requirements.

11 The team met with senior and academic staff to test that they understand and apply the School's approach to maintaining standards.

What the evidence shows

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

13 The Academic Council has responsibility, delegated from the Board of Directors, for oversight of the setting and maintenance of sector-recognised academic standards. Under its terms of reference, the Academic Council approves the quality assurance procedures (see paragraphs 15,16,17 and 18 below) used to maintain academic standards as set out in the School's Governance and Academic Regulations. These include the Academic Framework, Assessment and Classification Framework, Marking and Moderation Policy, Assessment Approval Procedure, External Examiners' Policy and Procedure, and Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation procedures. The Academic Council will conduct a cycle of annual quality and standards reviews, including reviews of all annual programme monitoring reports, a summary report on the outcomes and action plans from annual programme monitoring and an assessment of effectiveness of this procedure, and a summary report on the findings and action plans from external examiners' reports on standards. The Academic Council will also conduct an annual review of major academic policies and regulations and their effectiveness. The Council will then report to the Board of Directors on the outcomes of these annual reviews, including a summary of the monitoring, maintenance and protection of academic standards. These regulations provide evidence of the School's approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification as the underlying basis for standards of awards.

14 The School's Academic Framework defines the underpinning structure of programmes, specifying the minimum credit requirements for the award of Bachelor's with Honours (BAsc), and for associated exit awards. These requirements are all consistent with the typical credit values given in the Illustrative table of credit, Annex C of the FHEQ. The

School's Academic Framework also outlines the regulatory requirements for module credit weighting and design, including definitions guiding the designation of a module as compulsory, optional, supplementary (non-credit bearing), prerequisite to another subsequent module, co-requisite to another module which must be taken at the same time, restricted (as a combination with some other modules), condonable or non-condonable.

15 The Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation procedures include the Programme Approval Procedure. This requires the development and approval process to ensure that sector-recognised standards meet those described in the FHEQ, and a programme team to ensure that its programme aligns with sector-recognised standards. The role of the PMRAP is to receive proposals for new taught programmes and modules from programme development teams and make recommendations to the Academic Council as to whether those proposals should go forward. The procedures specify that this panel is chaired by an independent external member of the Academic Council, and includes at least one external adviser with relevant academic experience and, where possible, an external scrutineer, or scrutineers, appointed to provide a written report for the PMRAP on the credibility and standards of the modules. Responsibilities of the external adviser include providing comment on programme design, aims and learning outcomes, assessment methodology and resources. The external adviser must also provide assurance that the quality and standards of the programme or modules cohere with the FHEQ and comparable programmes in the sector, and comment on the reasonable comparability of the standards of the programme or modules relative to standards achieved at other UK providers in their experience. They must have relevant academic experience to the programme, be able to comment on the alignment of academic standards with national qualifications' frameworks and have no direct involvement with the programme in order to provide independent and impartial comment. Additional to the external adviser, external scrutineers are cognate subject academic experts appointed to review in detail the academic standards of each module. Their role is to write reports to a designated template for the PMRAP, confirming that each module is coherent, current and valid and that learning outcomes are set at the appropriate level of the FHEQ. Documentation submitted to the PMRAP includes a Programme Specification and a Learning Outcomes Matrix, mapping module learning outcomes against programme learning outcomes and giving threshold descriptors of each programme learning outcome at each level to align with the threshold descriptors of the FHEQ. Documentation also includes component module specifications in a template detailing indicative content, learning outcomes, and assessment strategy and methods. All programmes of study leading to an award must be approved by the Academic Council, taking into account the recommendations of the PMRAP. The Academic Framework, and procedures for course and assessment design and approval, provide clear evidence of the School's approach to the setting of academic standards at the relevant sector-recognised level.

16 The School's Assessment and Classification Framework defines the underpinning regulatory principles for assessment and classification of its programmes. These include the rules for calculating achievement of the pass mark of 40% as the minimum standard which students must meet in order to pass a module, progress through each level of study and be awarded a degree. The framework refers to the requirement for module documentation to include a comprehensive description of assessment tasks and marking criteria. It also sets out the numeric percentage marking scale for modules at Levels 4, 5 and 6 and clearly defines the rules for determining degree classifications. The Marking and Moderation Policy, Assessment Approval Procedure, and External Examiners Policy and Procedure detail processes for standardisation, marking, moderation, assessment leader (a member of the faculty, appointed by the Director of Teaching & Learning, with overall academic responsibility for an assessment) sign-off, and external examiner scrutiny and the confirmation of standards. These procedures for assessment, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification provide further evidence of the

School's approach to the setting of academic standards at the relevant level.

17 Under the Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation procedures, the stated purpose of the Annual Programme Monitoring Procedure includes ensuring that academic standards remain in line with sector-recognised standards and considering relevant external comments from external examiners and regulators. Each annual programme monitoring report must include an evidence-based evaluation of whether the programme meets its stated academic standards, including consistency with the FHEQ and the School's Governance and Academic Regulations. Each report must also analyse external examiner feedback and describe responses to any issues raised, with external examiner reports appended. There are also procedures for approving modifications to the programme and modules and for withdrawing modules, where such action might be required as a result of annual monitoring. The Academic Council will evaluate whether the standards and quality of the programme are adversely affected by the proposed withdrawal of a module. These procedures also evidence the School's credible plans to support the maintenance of academic standards at the relevant sector-recognised level.

18 The School's academic regulations, frameworks and policies are clear because they are well-presented, consistent and succinctly expressed in accessible language, and include glossaries and definitions of terms used. They are comprehensive because they detail fully the requirements and procedures for course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification, referencing the FHEQ and cross-referencing to other internal documents and sections within the regulations and frameworks where appropriate. These plans are robust because they are detailed, include external scrutiny and reflect clear lines of internal oversight and accountability. They are credible because they are consistent with wider sector practice and demonstrate the School's understanding of these practices. The review team therefore concludes that the School has clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards at the sector-recognised level.

19 In implementing the programme approval process for the BAsC in Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods, the School's only programme to date, the School followed and met the regulatory and documentary requirements of its own Programme Approval Procedure, set out in the academic regulations. This is evidenced in the School's summary of the process undertaken for the BAsC, the PMRAP minutes and outcome note, the Academic Council minutes, and the programme development team's response to the PMRAP. The team saw evidence and the minutes of the PMRAP record that the reports of the two external scrutineers, one of whom also attended the panel, confirm that modules at each level align with the requisite level of the FHEQ and are comparable to BAsC programmes at other providers. The panel also judged that the threshold standard is satisfactory, and that the proposed programme corresponds to the FHEQ and is aligned with the School's academic regulations. The external scrutineers' written reports also note that clear module outcomes are correctly pitched and confirm that the programme learning outcomes are clearly matched to the appropriate level of the FHEQ.

20 The approved programme specification sets out the programme aims and objectives, compulsory and option modules at each level, and details of credit, level and volume of study, including exit awards, which are consistent with the Illustrative table of credit in Annex C of the FHEQ. The programme specification and module specifications present the programme learning outcomes categorised by Knowledge, Skills and Attributes. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy clearly expounds the School's rationale for using these categories. This is, briefly, that the meanings of the above terms are clear and distinct and that they closely follow or mirror the language used in the sector, including that for graduate attributes and on other similar programmes at other providers. The linked Programme Learning Outcome Matrix articulates in tables the outcome classification

threshold descriptors for each level (4, 5 and 6), according to the classification mark boundaries set out in the academic regulations. At Level 6, the programme-specific outcomes in each classification category are consistent with the language of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6 on the FHEQ bachelor's degree with honours, notwithstanding that the School uses its own category titles of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes for types of outcomes. In order to reflect further externality and establish an internal reference point to inform sector-recognised standards in the BSc programme design, the School compared and mapped the published programme outcomes for established interdisciplinary programmes at four other providers against their own. The review team found that the sector-recognised standards described in the definitive course documentation align and are consistent with the FHEQ as the relevant national qualifications' framework.

21 The BSc Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix also maps in detail how module learning outcomes meet overall the programme learning outcomes at each level. The review team queried a minor oversight in the approved documentation relating to Level 6 programme learning outcomes. An omission on the programme learning outcomes matrix, whereby one programme learning outcome designed to be met by one of the compulsory Level 6 modules was not marked on the matrix, gave the impression that this programme learning outcome might not necessarily be met by all students. Subsequent evidence provided to the review team, consisting of minutes of a meeting of curriculum development team leaders, a clarification note about the mapping of the Level 6 module Capstone Project (an extended interdisciplinary research project), learning outcomes, and a record of email correspondence between two senior academics, verified the programme team's understanding of, and consistent planning for, how all students will meet all programme learning outcomes. In the clarification note, senior staff provided a clear plan, in accordance with the regulations, for progressing the necessary amendments to the definitive documentation to address the omission.

22 Module specifications present module learning outcomes mapped to the relevant programme learning outcomes for that level. These documents correspond with the Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix. The team found that there were some minor inconsistencies between the information on learning outcomes in the matrix and in a small number of module documents. Notwithstanding these minor inaccuracies of transcription, minutes of programme development team meetings attest that staff have received appropriate training and development in academic standards and the School's regulations, including the requirement to map all module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes. Senior and academic staff who met with the review team demonstrated that they are familiar with and understand these requirements. Senior staff confirmed that the School is committed to continued scrutiny of its approved definitive programme documentation in the period before delivery is due to start in September 2021, and to adding further detail to the guidance for external scrutineers in the approval procedure in order to strengthen the thorough checking of outcomes mapping at that stage in future.

23 The senior and academic staff who met the review team demonstrated familiarity with the FHEQ and thorough knowledge of the School's regulations and operational practices relating to the setting and maintenance of sector-recognised standards. For example, academic staff emphasised the importance within the annual programme monitoring process of external examiners' views on standards and also referred to using the modification process for updating or changing modules where necessary, including to address actions arising from external examiners or annual monitoring. The review team found that senior and academic staff showed a good understanding of the School's approach to setting and maintaining threshold standards and that they are fully committed to continuing to apply this once programme delivery has started.

Conclusions

24 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

25 From the evidence provided, the review team considers that the standards set for the School's programme are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. The evidence scrutinised by the team demonstrates that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are set appropriately.

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

27 Since assessed student work and external examiner reports are unavailable because the School has not yet started programme delivery, the effectiveness of the School's plans for maintaining threshold academic standards cannot yet be tested. However, the review team considers that these plans and approaches, which include regulations on marking, external examiner approval of assessments and scrutiny of assessed student work, annual programme monitoring and a wider annual overview report on quality and standards, are both robust and credible and that implementation of these plans will ensure the threshold standards for its qualifications. The review team therefore has a high degree of confidence in its 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

28 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.

29 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

30 The review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 BSc Programme Specification
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c BSc Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix
- d Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes 260220
- e Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes 090320
- f Academic Council minutes 160320
- g Sample of Module Forms and Assessment Instruments
- h Programme Development Team (PDT) Response to PMRAP
- i Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- j Module Specification Level 6 Capstone Project
- k Module Specification Level 6 Stories and Campaigns
- l Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIa
- m Module Specification Level 5 Thinking Visually
- n Module Specification Level 4 Problems Ib
- o Module Specification Level 4 Qualitative Methods Ia
- p Module Specification Level 5 Investigating the Physical World
- q Written Reports and LIS Responses to External Scrutineers
- r PDT minutes of Subcommittee of Methods Area Leaders 110120
- s PDT minutes Curriculum Development Meeting 200120
- t Module Specification Level 4 Problems Ic
- u Module Specification Level 4 Qualitative and Visual Methods Ia Communicating Visually and Verbally
- v Module Specification Level 4 Quantitative Methods Ib
- w Module Specification Level 5 Design Thinking
- x Module Specification Level 5 Ethics and Ethnographies
- y Module Specification Level 5 Further Statistics and Probability
- z Module Specification Level 5 Introduction to Data Engineering
- aa Module Specification Level 5 Investigating the Natural and Human World

bb	Module Specification Level 5 Mental Models and Superconcepts
cc	Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIb
dd	Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIc
ee	Module Specification Level 5 Telling the Story of a Wicked Problem
ff	Module Specification Level 6 Social Excavation
gg	Module Specification Level 6 Apparatus, Process and Subjective Methodologies in Photography and Videography
hh	Module Specification Level 6 Climate Change and Planetary Health
ii	Module Specification Level 6 Full Stack Web Development
jj	Module Specification Level 6 Further Data Engineering
kk	Module Specification Level 6 Global Citizenship
ll	Module Specification Level 6 Investigating the Natural and Human World 2
mm	Module Specification Level 6 Investigating the Physical World 2
nn	Module Specification Level 6 Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
oo	Module Specification Level 6 Podcasting and Power
pp	Module Specification Level 6 Skills for Sustainability
qq	Rubric Level 6 Capstone Project
rr	Meeting with senior staff
ss	Meeting with academic staff.

31 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

32 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise external examiner reports, third party endorsements (such as PSRB reports) or assessed student work.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

33 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

34 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the School 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 School'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.

35 The review team examined the Governance and Academic Regulations and Academic Council minutes to identify the School'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 award, and to interrogate the robustness of the School's plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards and to ensure that these plans are credible and evidence-based.

36 The team considered the approved programme documentation including programme specification and all module specifications to test that the specified standards beyond the threshold for the course are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The team also scrutinised a sample of provisional assessment instruments, Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes and notes, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, the Programme Development Team meeting

(PDT) minutes from meetings of the Programme Development Team and its response to the PMRAP's deliberations, as well as external scrutineers' written reports.

37 The review team met with senior and academic staff to test that they understand and apply the School's approach to setting and maintaining comparable standards.

What the evidence shows

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

39 The School's Governance and Academic Regulations include the Academic Framework, Assessment and Classification Framework, Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation procedures, Marking and Moderation Policy, Assessment Approval Procedure, and External Examiners Policy and Procedure. These frameworks, policies and procedures provide evidence of the School's approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification as the underlying basis for standards of awards.

40 The School's Academic Framework defines the structure of programmes, including the minimum credit requirements for awards and the regulatory requirements for module design, characteristics and credit weighting. The School's Assessment and Classification Framework defines the underpinning regulatory principles for assessment and classification of its programmes, setting out the percentage marking scale for modules at Levels 4, 5 and 6 and clearly defining the rules for determining degree classifications. The Numeric (Percentage) Marking Scale for Modules at Levels 4, 5 and 6 provides the structure for marks to be awarded, including those above the threshold pass level of 40%, and will be available to students through the Learning Management System. Average module marks, based on a ratio weighting marks at Levels 4, 5 and 6, will determine the degree classification.

41 The Assessment and Classification Framework prescribes that students will receive feedback on formative assessments to help them understand how to improve their performance, and also receive feedback for every summative assessment. Information for students, published in the annual assessment schedule, must include a comprehensive description of assessment tasks, including any rubrics, and the marking criteria against which students will be assessed. Feedback will be timely, to inform future learning and students will be encouraged to reflect on how to improve their performance. Feedback will be based on clear assessment criteria and will clarify to students how the marks were derived and the extent to which learning outcomes have been met. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy also states that formative assessment will provide students with feedback on their performance and give guidance on how it can be improved. The assessment approach specifies that summative assessment will formally evaluate the extent to which a student has achieved the programme's learning outcomes. These mechanisms are designed to support the development of students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.

42 The Assessment Approval Procedure, Marking and Moderation Policy and External Examiners' Policy and Procedure detail processes for assessment item approval, standardisation, marking and moderation, and external examiner scrutiny and confirmation of sector comparability of standards, including those above the threshold level. The Assessment Approval Procedure requires external examiners to scrutinise proposed summative assessment instruments and rubrics, including evidence that they enable students to achieve standards beyond the threshold that are reasonably comparable with those achieved at other UK providers. The Marking and Moderation Policy requires moderators of all summative assessments to consider whether the marker has correctly

applied the mark scheme and marking criteria to student work across a range of marks. After sign-off by the assessment leader, the external examiner scrutinises the schedule of marks and a sample of student assessed work across the range of marks to inform their judgement on the School's classification standards and confirmation that marking standards are reasonable and in line with sector standards. External examiners are also required to comment within their annual report on the extent to which the School's students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level. Under the Annual Programme Monitoring Procedure, programme teams are required to ensure that academic standards remain in line with sector benchmarks and consider relevant comments from external examiners and regulators.

43 The review team concludes that the School has clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks in place to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The team was satisfied that procedures for assessment and classification, marking and moderation, and external examining provide evidence that the School's plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards over time are credible.

44 In implementing the programme approval process for the BASc, the School followed and met the regulatory and documentary requirements of its own Programme Approval Procedure and Assessment and Classification Framework as set out in the Governance and Academic Regulations. This is evidenced by the School's summary of the process undertaken, the PMRAP minutes and outcome note, the Academic Council minutes, and the programme development team's response to the PMRAP. Programme Development Team meeting minutes confirm consideration of how students can exceed the pass requirement at each level. There are clear criteria for assessing student achievement of programme learning outcomes at each level, including achievement above the threshold, and these are consistent with the relevant levels of the FHEQ. The Level 6 programme-specific outcomes in each classification category are consistent with the language of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6 on the FHEQ bachelor's degree with honours.

45 Approved module specifications demonstrate a variety of assessment methods used across the programme to test different aspects of knowledge, skills and attributes. Provisional assessment instruments for all Level 4 modules were also submitted by the PDT as part of the Programme Approval Procedure. Examples of these assessment rubrics demonstrate that criteria are set for each level of marks available for each different aspect of an assessment task. Feedback is provided against criteria to enable students to understand why they have been awarded a particular mark. Additionally, for each module component on the assessment instrument feedback sheet there is a section for the tutor to write formative feedback to the student on how they might have gained higher marks. The team considered that this documentation provides further evidence describing standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers, that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where relevant standards have been met, and that plans for providing opportunities to students to achieve comparable higher standards are robust and credible.

46 The minutes of the PMRAP record external scrutineers' reports, confirming that module levels align to the requisite level of the FHEQ and are comparable to BASc programmes delivered at other providers. The panel, including an external adviser in addition to the two external scrutineers, judged that the programme corresponds to the FHEQ and is aligned with the School's academic regulations, and that the threshold standard and opportunities to achieve beyond the threshold were comparable with other BASc programmes. The review team therefore concludes that standards described in definitive approved course documentation beyond the threshold level are comparable with those in other UK providers and that these documents provide further evidence that the School's

plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards are robust and credible.

47 The senior and academic staff who met the review team demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the regulations and approved assessment practices relating to the setting and maintenance of academic standards beyond the threshold level and ensuring their comparability with those achieved in other UK providers. Senior staff affirmed that assessment tasks and rubrics would be introduced with explanations for students at the beginning of each module and that the degree classification process would be overseen by external examiners to ensure comparability. Academic staff reported that all assessment strategies are designed to be comparable to other providers. They confirmed that grade boundaries are comparable across levels and the programme, and the importance of communicating to students what is required from the outset. From this, teaching and learning is then designed to support students to achieve their potential. The review team found that senior and academic staff demonstrated a good understanding of, and commitment to applying, the School's approach to setting and maintaining standards, including those beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

Conclusions

48 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the School 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

49 Based on the evidence presented, the review team determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the School's programme 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 School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately.

50 The team determined that, based on the evidence seen, the standards that will be achieved by the School's students beyond the threshold are expected to be comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The team considered that the School's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards beyond the threshold are maintained. Based on the detailed scrutiny of the evidence, the review team considered that staff at the School fully understand the School's approach to maintaining such standards and have opportunities for engagement with peers and external experts in teaching and assessment activities. The review team considers the School's plans for maintaining comparable standards beyond the threshold level appropriate, well documented and understood by staff members.

51 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 and this Core practice is met.

52 Since assessed student work and external examiner reports are unavailable, reflecting the School's current stage in the delivery cycle, the effectiveness of the School's plans for providing students with opportunities to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers cannot yet be tested. However, the review team considers that these plans and approaches, which

include regulations and documentation on degree classification, teaching and assessment design and criteria, marking and moderation, external examiner approval of assessments and scrutiny of assessed student work and annual programme monitoring, are both robust and credible. The review team therefore has a high degree of confidence in its judgement.

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

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

54 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

55 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 Programme Specification
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix
- d LIS Programme Approval Process for BASc
- e Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes (26/02/20)
- f Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) Outcome Note (26/02/20)
- g Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes (09/03/20)
- h Academic Council minutes (16/03/20)
- i Register of LIS External Examiners and Advisors
- j Academic Council minutes (18/12/19)
- k Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- l Academic Calendar
- m Meeting with senior staff 1
- n Meeting with senior staff 2
- o Meeting with academic staff
- p Meeting with professional support staff
- q Final meeting with senior staff.

56 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

57 The School has yet to commence delivery, so it was not possible for the team to scrutinise external examiner reports or meet with students. As the team had no specific concerns there was no need to arrange to meet with external experts associated with the School's activities to date.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

58 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

59 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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 provider'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.

60 The review team considered the Programme Specification, Governance and Academic Regulations, LIS Programme Approval Process for BASc, Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel meeting records, Academic Council meeting records, Registers of LIS External Examiners and Advisors, to identify how external experts will be used in setting and maintaining academic standards, and how the School's assessment and classification processes will operate.

61 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations and Academic Calendar to assess whether plans for using external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards and plans for assessment and classification processes are credible, robust and evidence based.

62 The team considered the Programme Specification, Governance and Academic Regulations, Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, to assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the programme to be offered.

63 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel meeting records, Academic Council meeting records, and Written Reports and Responses to External Scrutineers to interrogate the use of external examiners and verify that the School will consider and respond appropriately to external reports regarding standards.

64 The team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel meeting records and Academic Council meeting records to test that external experts will be used according to the School's regulations and policies.

65 The review team met with senior, academic and professional support staff to test that they understand the requirements for the use of external expertise, and the School's assessment and classification processes.

What the evidence shows

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

67 The School's Governance and Academic Regulations provide clear and comprehensive information to permit the operation of assessment and classification processes. The regulations set out clear expectations for developing assessments, marking and moderating student work, providing student feedback, managing mitigating circumstances, providing personalised assessment and evaluating academic performance. The Governance and Academic Regulations also contain the Assessment and Classification Framework, which defines classification procedures and provides comprehensive coverage of marking scales, module mark calculations, progression requirements, arrangements for reassessment and qualification award criteria. In the definition of the classification procedures, the School's Governance and Academic Regulations are explicit, quantitative and applicable to all students when specifying the academic standards that must be attained

in order to achieve each classification.

68 The programme approval process provides a transparent and auditable basis for the development of programmes that incorporates external expertise and establishes robust assessment and classification processes. This is because the programme approval process has external oversight and requires the attributes of each module to be extensively specified, the latter including details of assessment methods, assessment weightings and intended learning outcomes for each module. The PMRAP is responsible for reviewing and approving the programme specification and its modules. The PMRAP also has the ongoing role of monitoring the programme specification as changes are recommended and made over the lifetime of the programme. This specification and module review is done with regard to the Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, the latter of which prescribes the diagnostic, formative and summative assessment methods that modules may incorporate. Approval must be obtained from the PMRAP before programme and module specifications are considered by the Academic Council.

69 The Governance and Academic Regulations contain the External Academic Expertise Framework. This prescribes a comprehensive framework for the use of external expertise in establishing and maintaining standards. A distinction is made and enforced between external examiners, who have yet to be appointed, to provide oversight of academic standards as the programme is delivered, and external experts, who have provided advice and scrutiny in the development of programmes and modules. The External Academic Expertise Framework contains protocols with regard to the appointment and consultation with external examiners, assessment approval by external examiners and support provided to them to fulfil their duties. External examiners will participate in the decision-making processes of examination boards. Further, external examiners will produce an annual report for the consideration of the Academic Council, so that the views of externals can be used to inform programme monitoring and enhancement. The external examiner reports will include reflections on assessments reviewed throughout the year, classification procedures, student attainment and comparability with similar providers. The annual review of external examiner reports is maintained as part of the Academic Calendar to ensure that external contributions are considered and actioned at a senior level within the School. The School will provide written responses to external examiner reports and has already responded to the external experts who have been involved in the development of the programme and modules.

70 Senior and academic staff were able to explain the use of external expertise, providing a detailed account of the role external examiners will play in assessment, classification and programme enhancement. Professional support staff demonstrated an awareness of external contributions and how these are considered. Senior and academic staff were able to provide clear explanations of assessment and classification procedures, including details of where staff and students could locate relevant information and the role of committees in ensuring fairness and reliability in these processes. Professional support staff have a clear understanding of their role in supporting assessment and classification procedures.

Conclusions

71 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the School 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

72 The School uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. This is because it has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards. The processes for assessment and classification, as outlined in regulations and policies, are clear and comprehensive. Discussions with senior, academic and professional support staff demonstrated that assessment and classification procedures are well understood and likely to be effective when implemented. The plans for the use of external examiners and the consideration of reports are robust and credible because they are embedded within regulations, receive due oversight, and the staff who will operate these plans understand the requirements for the incorporation of external expertise. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

73 The observations of the review team were based upon examination of the full range of evidence described in Annex 4, with the exception of assessed student work and external examiner reports. These exceptions were due to the School's current stage in the programme delivery cycle. In the absence of these forms of evidence, the effectiveness of the approach for the use of external expertise could not be tested and the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes could not be fully confirmed. However, the fairness and transparency of the School's regulations relating to the use of externals and the operation of assessment and classification processes, alongside the clearly defined and comprehensive assessment and classification procedures, mitigate the absence of these forms of evidence. The review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

75 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

76 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 Programme Specification
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c Access and Participation Plan
- d Academic Council minutes (16/03/20)
- e Quality Framework
- f Student Support Framework
- g Organisation Structure Overview
- h Academic Community Development Framework
- i Application Form Testing Sample
- j Digital Systems and IT Infrastructure
- k Admissions Background Document
- l Student Feedback on Discovery Days
- m General Policies and Procedures
- n Admissions Communications
- o Website Content
- p LIS website - www.londoninterdisciplinarieschool.org. Accessed 18-21 May 2020
- q Meeting with senior staff 1
- r Meeting with senior staff 2
- s Meeting with academic staff
- t Meeting with professional support staff
- u Final meeting with senior staff.

77 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

78 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise admissions records or to meet with students. The team did not scrutinise arrangements with recruitment agents because the School informed the team that it does not work with agents and has no plans to do so.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

79 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

80 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the School 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 School'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.

81 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, Access and Participation Plan, Student Support Framework, Organisation Structure Overview, Admissions Background Document, and General Policies and Procedures, to identify institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students, support for applicants and how the School will verify applicants' entry qualifications.

82 The team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, Student Support Framework, Organisation Structure Overview and General Policies and Procedures to identify the roles and responsibilities of staff that will be involved in the admissions process.

83 The review team took into account the Governance and Academic Regulations, Access and Participation Plan, Admissions Background Document and General Policies and Procedures to identify how the School will facilitate an inclusive admissions system.

84 The team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations and General Policies and Procedures to identify how the School will handle admissions complaints and appeals.

85 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, Access and Participation Plan, Quality Framework, General Policies and Procedures and Student Support Framework to assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive.

86 The review team scrutinised the application Form Testing Sample, Digital Systems and IT Infrastructure, Student Feedback on Discovery Days, Admission Communication and Website Content to test whether the information that will be given to applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose.

87 The team considered the Programme Specification, Governance and Academic Regulations, Access and Participation Plan and Academic Council minutes (16/03/20) to test whether admissions requirements for the courses sampled reflect the School's overall regulations and policy.

88 The review team met with senior academic and professional support staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admissions processes, to test whether staff understand their responsibilities, are appropriately skilled and supported and can articulate how the School's approach to inclusivity is manifest in the admissions process.

What the evidence shows

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

90 The Governance and Academic Regulations contains a clear policy for the recruitment and admission of students, which provides a sound basis for the establishment and operation of a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This admissions policy is informed by the School's Equality and Diversity Policy and is considered by the School to be the 'main lever by which LIS is aiming to achieve its institutional access objectives for lower HE participation, household income and socioeconomic groups, BAME students, and disabled students' as part of its Access and Participation Plan.

91 The School prescribes no minimum grade tariff for entry. Instead it will evaluate each applicant holistically, taking account of prior attainment in the context of individual background and potential for success on the School's programme. The admissions policy in the Governance and Academic Regulations requires all applicants to complete an online application form that captures information on prior academic attainment and contextual background. The application form has been designed as part of the student records system in the School's Digital Systems and IT Infrastructure and has been tested with prospective students for clarity and accessibility. All applicants will be invited to a selection day, during which they will be subject to a standardised behavioural interview and a set of standardised case study problems. Students will be selected on the basis of their academic attainment, responses to the case study problems, and performance in the behavioural interview. This selection will also take account of the background of applicants using three contextual flags. These flags are based on indicators relating to the education background, individual circumstances and geo-demographic situation of each applicant.

92 The Governance and Academic Regulations contain a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure that sets out how the School will consider the admission of individuals with prior learning. The policy defines two categories of prior learning, prior certified learning and prior experiential learning, and informs applicants of how they can apply for the recognition of prior learning. Applicants may seek recognition of prior learning for one or more purposes and in one or both prior learning categories, up to a maximum of 90 credits of the total credit requirement for an award. The Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for determining whether a student may be exempt from a module of a programme given prior certificated or experiential learning.

93 The admissions policy in the Governance and Academic Regulations defines a procedure by which the entry qualifications of applicants will be verified. The procedure relies on external validation and measures that cannot easily be circumvented by applicants or unauthorised entities. The process is reliable and transparent since it ensures that no applicant can be admitted to a programme of study without the provision of third-party verification or original confirmations relating to their qualifications.

94 The admissions policy in the Governance and Academic Regulations makes explicit reference to the opportunity for a prospective student to complain about the admissions process or to appeal a decision not to offer a place and includes the relevant procedures for handling admissions appeals and complaints. The opportunity to complain about the admissions process or to appeal a decision not to offer a place is also communicated to students as part of the application process.

95 Staff responsibilities for admissions are defined in the School's Governance and Academic Regulations. The Director of Admissions and Student Support is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the admissions process including the development of the admissions approach and selection days. However, the Director of Teaching and Learning is ultimately responsible for making all final admissions decisions. The responsibilities of the staff involved in student induction and the associated training of staff is described in the Student Support Framework and Academic Community Development Framework. The reporting relationships between those with responsibilities in admissions is captured by the

School's Governance and Academic Regulations and Organisation Structure Overview, the components of the latter being supportive of the processes that underpin the admissions process.

96 There is a strong, well-documented and credible focus on inclusivity and widening participation in the School's Access and Participation Plan and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The Access and Participation Plan is inclusive in its implementation of the admissions process by taking account of socio-economic and geo-demographic factors, experience, and caring responsibilities, focusing on support for applicant groups where there are potential barriers to higher education. The Student Support Framework includes the Students with Specific Learning Differences Plan, which predominantly outlines pre-registration activity, including opportunities for disclosure of additional learning needs and consideration of reasonable adjustments that can be made during the recruitment and selection process.

97 The School has established oversight in admissions at a senior level, with the Academic Council having responsibility for reviewing admissions via the annual quality assurance cycle to ensure the standardisation and effectiveness of the process. This review mechanism is designed to ensure that the admissions policy contained in the Governance and Academic Regulations is being faithfully implemented, resulting in a reliable, fair and inclusive approach to admissions. The School will make use of a range of data to support the analysis of its approach to admissions. This will include the composition of the student body and success rates of students facing disadvantage as set out in the School's Access and Participation Plan, feedback from applicants, any related complaints and appeals, and an audit of the selection instruments used. The Quality Framework details how this monitoring fits into the School's annual quality cycle, with the next review scheduled for September 2020, and reported by the Admissions Decisions Committee to the Academic Council.

98 Staff training forms a key component of the School's plans to establish reliable, fair and inclusive admissions. In particular, training for interviewers includes coverage of awareness of difference, communication skills, unconscious bias, discrimination avoidance, key programme requirements, interview approaches, data protection and providing a positive experience for applicants regardless of outcome. The Director of Admissions and Student Support has oversight and responsibility for the compulsory training provided to those involved in admissions, including the Director of Widening Participation and all academic staff involved in selection days. These plans are credible and, inasmuch as the School has detailed monitoring processes in place for when applications are processed, robust.

99 The School's website provides clear and comprehensive information for applicants. The information on the website includes full coverage of the admissions process, advice on the suitability of the School's programmes, discussion of alternative study options and information to support students through the application process. Direct communications with applicants are similarly robust, clear and comprehensive, providing sufficient information in an appropriate form at each stage of the admissions process. The School has undertaken to provide successful applicants with the Terms and Conditions of the offer, the Compensation and Refunds Policy, and the Student Protection Plan as part of its offer-making processes, each of which is in the Governance and Academic Regulations. There is evidence of positive feedback from prospective students on the open days that the School operates, with feedback commenting on the interactivity, friendliness and general positivity of the events. Across the School's website and direct communications, all information provided to prospective students is comprehensive, transparent, accessible and fit for purpose.

100 Admissions requirements in approved course documentation are consistent with the School's stated regulations and policies. In particular, the stated admissions requirements

and considerations are consistent across definitive course documentation and the admissions policy contained in the School's regulations.

101 Meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff who will be involved in admissions confirmed that they understand their role in the admissions process and could articulate the School's approach to inclusivity, as it is described in the Access and Participation Plan. All senior, academic and professional support staff involved in the admissions process confirmed that they will receive training in support of their role, including specific sessions on making selection decisions, interview approaches and inclusivity. Academic and professional support staff involved in the admissions process confirmed that they will receive annual admissions training. Senior staff stated that annual admissions training will include updates to entry criteria and guidance on the management of selection events.

Conclusions

102 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the School 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

103 The School has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because the School has a clear policy for the recruitment, selection and admission of students, taking account of academic attainment, individual circumstances and backgrounds as part of this policy, which is designed to be reliable, fair and inclusive. Its plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive are robust and credible. Academic and professional support staff involved in admissions understand their roles, which are clearly defined by the admissions policy. Training has been established to ensure that all staff involved in admissions are appropriately skilled, including compulsory training relating to inclusivity and admissions. The admissions information provided by the School to prospective students is transparent, fit for purpose and accessible. Further, admissions requirements in approved course documentation are consistent with the School's admissions policy. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

104 The observations of the review team were based upon examination of the full range of evidence described in Annex 4, with the exception of admissions records and the views of students. These exceptions were due to the School's current stage in the programme delivery cycle. In the absence of these forms of evidence, the effectiveness of the approach to ensuring a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system could not be fully tested. However, the School's admissions policies and plans for delivery, alongside the commitment to annually review the effectiveness of admissions processes and to monitor the outcomes of this analysis, mitigate the absence of these forms of evidence. The review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

106 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

107 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 BSc Programme Specification
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c Strategy and Business Plan
- d BSc Programme Learning Outcomes Matrix
- e Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes 260220
- f Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) Outcome Note 260220
- g Programme and Module Review and Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes 090320
- h Sample of Module Forms and Assessment Instruments
- i Programme Development Team (PDT) Response to PMRAP
- j Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- k Background to Programme Development
- l Prelaunch Surveys, Focus Groups and Findings
- m Module Specification Level 6 Capstone Project
- n Module Specification Level 6 Stories and Campaigns
- o Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIa
- p Module Specification Level 5 Thinking Visually
- q Module Specification Level 4 Problems Ib
- r Module Specification Level 4 Qualitative Methods Ia
- s Module Specification Level 5 Investigating the Physical World
- t Written Reports and LIS Responses to External Scrutineers
- u Changes made as a result of student engagement
- v Student Summative Assessment Load
- w Clarification on number of Module Learning Outcomes per module
- x PDT minutes of Subcommittee of Methods Area Leaders 110120
- y PDT minutes of Curriculum Development Meeting 200120Module Specification Level 4 Problems Ic
- z Module Specification Level 4 Qualitative and Visual Methods Ia Communicating Visually and Verbally
- aa Module Specification Level 4 Quantitative Methods Ib
- bb Module Specification Level 5 Design Thinking
- cc Module Specification Level 5 Ethics and Ethnographies
- dd Module Specification Level 5 Further Statistics and Probability

ee	Module Specification Level 5 Introduction to Data Engineering
ff	Module Specification Level 5 Investigating the Natural and Human World
gg	Module Specification Level 5 Mental Models and Superconcepts
hh	Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIb
ii	Module Specification Level 5 Problems IIc
jj	Module Specification Level 5 Telling the Story of a Wicked Problem
kk	Module Specification Level 6 Social Excavation
ll	Module Specification Level 6 Apparatus, Process and Subjective Methodologies in Photography and Videography
mm	Module Specification Level 6 Climate Change and Planetary Health
nn	Module Specification Level 6 Full Stack Web Development
oo	Module Specification Level 6 Further Data Engineering
pp	Module Specification Level 6 Global Citizenship
qq	Module Specification Level 6 Investigating the Natural and Human World 2
rr	Module Specification Level 6 Investigating the Physical World 2
ss	Module Specification Level 6 Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
tt	Module Specification Level 6 Podcasting and Power
uu	Module Specification Level 6 Skills for Sustainability
vv	Capstone Project: Programme Learning Outcomes Clarification
ww	Rubric Level 6 Capstone Project
xx	Use of Module Performance Data
yy	Meeting with senior staff
zz	Meeting with senior staff
aaa	Meeting with academic staff
bbb	Meeting with professional support staff
ccc	Final meeting with senior staff.

108 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

109 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise external examiner reports, third party endorsements (such as PSRB reports) or students' views (student submission, internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations). It was also not possible for the team to meet with students, third parties (for example employers of graduates) or to conduct observations of teaching and learning.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

110 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

111 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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 provider'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.

112 The review team examined the Governance and Academic Regulations to identify the School's approach to designing and delivering high-quality courses.

113 The team scrutinised the Governance and Academic Regulations, Strategy and

Business Plan and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, and considered evidence of the background to programme development, prelaunch surveys, focus groups and findings, changes made as a result of student engagement and use of module performance data to assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for designing high-quality courses.

114 The review team examined the approved programme documentation including the programme specification and all module specifications to test that all elements of the courses sampled are high quality (curriculum design, content and organisation, learning, teaching and assessment approaches) and that the teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. The team also scrutinised a sample of provisional assessment instruments chosen by the School, PMRAP minutes and notes, alongside Programme Development Team minutes and its response to PMRAP, external scrutineers' written reports and the School's responses, evidence of student summative assessment load, clarification notes on the number of learning outcomes per module, and a clarification statement regarding programme learning outcomes for the Capstone project provided by the School during the review visit.

115 The review team met with senior staff, academic staff and professional support staff to assess how they ensure courses are high quality.

What the evidence shows

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

117 The School's academic regulations and policies include the Academic Framework, Assessment and Classification Framework and Programme Design, Development, and Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures. The Academic Framework defines the structure and requirements of the School's awards, programmes of study and modules, including credit requirements. The framework specifies that programme delivery is full-time over three terms of the academic year. The Assessment and Classification Framework sets out the regulatory principles for assessment. It defines formative and summative assessment, and assessment components, strategies and tasks within its guidance. The assessment strategies set out on module specifications should contribute to a variety of assessment methods used across a programme to test different knowledge and skills.

118 The Programme Design, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures set out relevant principles and procedures in the Programme Development Policy, General Programme/Module Approval Policies and Programme Approval Procedure. This documentation includes the requirement to ensure that approved programmes will provide a high-quality academic experience to students from all backgrounds. The procedure states that proposed programmes must align with sector standards and benchmarks, including relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ. Documentation for submission to the PMRAP must include a programme specification, learning outcomes matrix and module forms of component modules, which are all reviewed by independent external scrutineers. The procedures state that the PMRAP panel will confirm alignment with sector standards and internal regulations, and their satisfaction that the assessment strategy and process are robust, the programme is coherent, teaching staff are appropriately qualified, learning resources are fit for the programme, and that the programme displays commitment to equity and does not present unnecessary barriers to students with specific learning differences.

119 The Programme Monitoring Policy and Procedure require an annual review of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment strategies of the programme and planning of any consequent changes. This includes the evaluation of how staff and student feedback has been considered and

actioned, consideration of relevant external examiner comments, identification of any trends in student recruitment, progression and achievement, particularly in relation to support for certain groups of students and reporting on any teaching and learning enhancements. The Academic Council reviews annual programme monitoring reports and a summary report on outcomes and action plans, and conducts termly reviews of student retention, attainment and progression statistics provided by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, as well as termly student feedback on modules, to determine actions to address emerging issues. There are, therefore, plans for a comprehensive annual monitoring process. The review team found that the School's regulations, policies and procedures for course design, delivery and monitoring are clear, comprehensive and thorough, and facilitate the design and delivery of high-quality courses.

120 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy articulates the School's curricular and pedagogic philosophy as centred on real-world, complex problems and an interdisciplinary approach to learning. The School's Strategy and Business Plan also states that the interdisciplinarity is built on knowledge from different disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach to problem-based learning informs the School's plans for designing varied content and learning and teaching methods, drawing on research and collaboration with external academics in the field. The Strategy details the School's approaches to learning, knowledge, research methods, teaching and assessment, and the rationale for its categorising of learning outcomes as knowledge, skills and attributes.

121 The School notes in its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy that there is no published Subject Benchmark Statement relating to Interdisciplinary Studies and makes no reference to any other published Subject Benchmark Statement in its programme design. An unpublished draft Liberal Arts and Sciences Subject Benchmark Statement proposed by a national group of academics involved in interdisciplinary provision is appended to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy as an indicative statement. As a further informal external subject reference point in designing its own programme outcomes, the School has considered the published curriculum content and programme outcomes for established interdisciplinary programmes at four other UK providers.

122 To inform programme design, the programme development team also drew on views of relevant stakeholders, such as alumni and students of interdisciplinary programmes at other providers and potential employers, in accordance with the Programme Approval Procedure. The School held focus groups with a range of schools and students, including students and graduates of BASc and other interdisciplinary programmes at other providers. Surveys and focus groups influenced the curriculum by eliciting, for example, ideas on how to structure the curriculum, and suggestions for group work and regular team-building exercises, and student engagement at Discovery Days led to the addition of a Level 6 module on Sustainability. The School also consulted with employers' representatives to support the programme development team's understanding of what employers want from the graduates that they employ. The review team found that the School has credible and evidence-based approaches and plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses.

123 The review team found that the definitive programme documentation for the BASc in Interdisciplinary Problems and Methods, including programme and all module specifications and the programme learning outcomes matrix all conform to the requirements of the School's academic regulations. The interdisciplinary philosophy and approach outlined in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy shape an innovative curriculum organised around problems, disciplines and research methods, with a Capstone Project at Level 6 providing students with the opportunity to carry out an extended interdisciplinary research project. The programme learning outcomes emphasise knowledge, concepts, methods and perspectives from a range of disciplines, reflecting the School's stated position that interdisciplinarity builds on disciplinary knowledge. Module aims, content and outcomes

are aligned with this overall approach and are appropriately challenging for each level of study. The programme structure specifies that all Level 4 modules are compulsory. At Levels 5 and 6 students must take optional modules in both qualitative and quantitative methods; at Level 6 a minimum of one of five optional modules taken must be selected from each type respectively. All of the 'Problems' modules at all levels are compulsory, as are the Capstone Project and mixed methods research and interdisciplinarity modules at Level 6. This structure is to ensure that students maintain a balanced interdisciplinary approach to integrating concepts and methods in problem-based learning throughout their programme.

124 Module specifications describe a varied range of learning and teaching methods, including individual and interactive activities alongside lectures, master-classes and seminars. In module specifications, the learning and teaching strategy for each learning outcome is presented with module learning outcomes aligned to relevant programme learning outcomes under the headings of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes. Assessment tasks are varied and often integrated holistically with learning and teaching activity. For example, in one Level 4 module assessment activities include preparing questions for a panel, a group presentation and reflection, a systems diagram, peer assessment and a group report. Examples provided of assessment rubrics are clear and detailed and include well-structured task-specific marking criteria against the assessment criteria for each component. The review team found that curriculum design, content and organisation, and teaching and learning design should enable students to demonstrate the intended interdisciplinary programme learning outcomes.

125 The team found that the number of learning outcomes per module was generally high (with a significant number having more than six learning outcomes and some having more than ten), and that there were several instances where learning outcomes will be assessed more than once. Although the number of learning outcomes varies between modules, the School is able to articulate and justify its approach within the context of its interdisciplinary ethos and highly varied, diverse modules. Academic staff have participated in training on the completion of module forms, which included guidelines on the importance of aligning and mapping learning outcomes with the programme learning outcomes matrix. These guidelines also stated that the number of module learning outcomes may vary according to content while suggesting that they are 'best limited to approximately 3-5 per module, and certainly no more than ten per module'. Subsequent discussion within the programme development team led to an agreed process for scrutinising the number of module learning outcomes and permitting some modules to exceed the suggested limit providing the number of assessments for students remains manageable. Examples of such permitted instances include a module providing a broad introduction and grounding in various investigative methods and a module involving a high number of granular skills-based learning outcomes.

126 The PMRAP panel minutes note 'a potential tendency to over-assess in a number of specific modules' and external scrutineers queried the assessment load in some proposed modules. The review team saw evidence that the programme development team had responded positively to several of the external scrutineers' suggestions and comments on content and learning outcomes. These responses and the approved module specifications indicate that in several cases the assessment was revised, including some reductions in word count requirements and changes of some assessment items from summative to formative tasks. The programme development team's response to the PMRAP conditions and recommendations includes the mapping of students' workload and summative assessment load in years two and three of their studies. The subsequent PMRAP minutes note that 'the Programme Development Team had given a very thorough and effective response to the Panel's conditions and recommendations'.

127 The reports of the two external scrutineers regarding the proposed programme,

including their written comments on modules considered for approval, are generally very positive. They confirmed that module learning outcomes align with, and support the outcomes of, the programme; that they are coherent, relevant and current; and that the proposed methods of delivery provide students with a fair and reasonable opportunity to achieve the academic standards required for successful achievement of the learning outcomes. These comments confirm that the course is of high quality.

128 The senior staff who met the review team demonstrated a good understanding of the School's strategy and design for teaching, learning and assessment. They confirmed that the use of other interdisciplinary programmes as external reference points against which to map their own programme learning outcomes had been productive, in the absence of a relevant set of formal Subject Benchmark Statements. They iterated the School's approach to designing a wide variety of module learning outcomes and assessment tasks for students and would keep the assessment load and student performance under review through the annual monitoring system overseen by Academic Council, including the termly scrutiny of student module performance data and student feedback. The academic staff who met the review team were well informed about course design and understood, for example, the principles and process for justifying where a greater number of learning outcomes for a module might be appropriate. They were aware of the feedback from external scrutineers in the programme approval process and had acted upon this to amend assessments in some cases. They also demonstrated an understanding of the value of varied assessment formats to reflect the learning backgrounds and interests of different types of students. The professional support staff who met the review team demonstrated an understanding of how the cycle of the academic calendar, particularly in relation to assessment, might impact on the support needs of students and felt confident in discussing any related issues appropriately with academic staff. The review team found that staff are able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of the School, and to show how the provision meets that definition.

Conclusions

129 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

130 The School designs and has credible, robust and evidence-based plans to deliver high-quality courses. The School's academic regulations and policies facilitate this through being clear, comprehensive and thorough. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy articulates the School's underlying aims and purpose in designing and delivering its interdisciplinary provision and combines with the regulatory requirements to facilitate the design of a coherent programme and modules. Approved programme documentation, which is consistent with the regulations and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, indicates to the review team that the teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Senior, academic and professional support staff who met with the team are able to articulate a good understanding of what 'high quality' means in the context of the School, and to show how the programme meets that definition. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

131 There is no evidence yet available of assessed student work, external examiner reports, students' views or direct observation of learning and teaching, reflecting the School's current stage in the delivery cycle. Consequently, the effectiveness of the School's plans and approaches to the design and delivery of high-quality courses cannot yet be tested.

However, the review team considers that these plans and approaches, which include comprehensive academic regulations, a detailed Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and definitive programme documentation, together with annual programme monitoring and review taking into account students' views (those of graduates of BAsC and other interdisciplinary programmes at other providers) and external scrutineers' comments, are both robust and credible and that implementation of these plans will maintain the ongoing design and future delivery of high-quality courses. The review team, therefore, 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

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

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, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 LIS QSR Provider Submission
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c Student Support Framework
- d Organisation Structure Overview
- e Academic Community Development Framework
- f Academic Staffing Calculations
- g General Policies and Procedures
- h Staff Handbook
- i Faculty Recruitment Process
- j Scoring Rubric for Faculty Applicant Class
- k Structured Questions for Faculty Interviews
- l Academic staff CVs
- m QAA academic staffing spreadsheet
- n Non-academic staff CVs
- o Professional Development Programme (draft)
- p Meeting with senior staff 1
- q Meeting with senior staff 2
- r Meeting with academic staff
- s Meeting with professional support staff
- t Final meeting with senior staff.

135 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

136 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise third party endorsements (for example from a PSRB or awarding organisation) or students' views (student submission, internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations). It was also not possible for the team to meet with students or conduct observations of teaching and learning.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

137 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

138 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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 provider'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.

139 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, General Policies and Procedures, Staff Handbook, Faculty Recruitment Process, Scoring Rubric for Faculty Applicant Class, Structured Questions for Faculty Interviews and draft Professional Development Programme, to identify how the School recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff.

140 The team considered the Academic Community Development Framework, Academic Staffing Calculations, LIS QSR Provider Submission, Staff Handbook, Faculty Recruitment Process, Scoring Rubric for Faculty Applicant Class, Structured Questions for Faculty Interviews to assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that they have sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience.

141 The review team considered the Organisation Structure Overview, Academic Community Development Framework Academic Staffing Calculations, QAA Academic Staffing Spreadsheet to identify the roles or posts the School has to deliver a high-quality learning experience and assess whether they are sufficient.

142 The team scrutinised the job descriptions in the Academic Community Development Framework, the Student Support Framework, Staff Handbook, academic staff CVs and non-academic staff CVs to assess whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to perform their roles effectively.

143 The review team considered Governance and Academic Regulations, academic staff CVs and non-academic staff CVs to assess whether staff were recruited according to the School's policies and procedures.

144 The team met with senior, academic and professional support staff to cross-check the outcomes identified by desk-based activities relating to the School having appropriately qualified and skilled staff.

What the evidence shows

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

146 The School has developed a four-stage Faculty Recruitment Process to support the recruitment and appointment of appropriately qualified and skilled staff. Account is taken of the School's Governance and Academic Regulations and Equality and Diversity Policy in the shortlisting and evaluation of candidates. The Faculty Recruitment Process involves an application, shortlisting, a practical task and final interview stages. Each stage focuses on evaluating the requirements and competencies described in the associated job descriptions

found in the Academic Community Development Framework. For example, the practical task that each shortlisted faculty candidate completes involves the delivery of a taught class to the School's staff and students, where this is evaluated against clear and structured criteria detailed in the Scoring Rubric for Faculty Applicant Class. The interview rubric and scoring criteria for the final interview are similarly clearly structured. The School has received 612 applications to date, with 35 staff progressing past the shortlisting stage to complete the practical task and final interview. The Faculty Recruitment Process provides examples of positive feedback from final round candidates, who commented favourably on the opportunities the recruitment process provided to acquit themselves. The above process should, therefore, provide for the recruitment and appointment of appropriately qualified and skilled staff.

147 During induction, the Staff Handbook provides appointed staff with comprehensive and relevant information. This information includes coverage of staff leave, flexible working, grievances procedures, performance review and training. The Faculty Training Programme, as described in the Academic Community Development Framework, outlines the development opportunities that the School will provide for academic staff. The School categorises its training opportunities as relating to pedagogy, assessment, curriculum design and research, with multiple courses being available under each category. The Class Observation Policy, as described in the Academic Community Development Framework, is a compulsory process that the School will use to support staff in their development, to evaluate consistency in programme delivery, consider the extent to which the programme is well received and to identify considerations for senior staff in the provision of a high-quality academic experience for students.

148 The draft Professional Development Programme encompasses the development of professional support staff. The importance of training for support staff is recognised in the Student Support Framework, which details a two-day training session that will be held for all staff in student support and student-facing roles. Training for academic tutors is outlined in the Academic Support Policy and the Student Support Framework, which also outlines a series of activities for all staff, and some specific training for welfare staff. The mandatory training courses to be provided by the Professional Development Programme address topics such as the UK Quality Code and regulatory frameworks, health and safety, safeguarding, consumer protection legislation, data protection, student engagement, ethical conduct and human resource policies. Additional training will be provided for all staff in each academic year, including courses on unconscious bias, gender diversity and sexual harassment. Individual departments will also provide function-specific training, with a named member of senior staff having responsibility for maintaining training records detailed in the Professional Development Programme. These plans provide for staff to be sufficiently inducted to the School and supported in their ongoing professional development.

149 At the time of the review visit, the Academic Staffing Spreadsheet showed that two-thirds of academic staff were employed on permanent contracts, with only one academic position to be filled. While these are currently fractional contracts, the School has stated in its submission to QAA that it intends faculty staff to move to full-time contracts during the Summer of 2020. The School has detailed how both academic and professional support staffing levels are determined according to calculations that account for factors such as the average hours worked in a day, the number of modules taught, expected administrative contributions, expected number of taught sessions and anticipated student numbers in its academic staffing calculations. The roles and staff commitments used in the calculation of academic and professional support staffing are consistent with the Academic Community Development Framework and Staff Handbook and are credible. The Organisation Structure Overview includes a recruitment plan that includes key job descriptions and details for the School's planned growth of the staff, by department, through to 2023-24, that appears credible based on the expected numbers of students being recruited during this period.

150 With approximately 15 months to go before enrolling its first cohort, the review team saw evidence that the School has recruited almost all of its planned academic staff for the first year of delivery as well as key professional support staff such as the Director of Admissions & Student Support, the Senior Student Support Manager and Director of Careers and Networks. The review team concluded that the School is, therefore, well placed for there to be sufficient staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience in the Autumn of 2021 with credible plans in place in the Organisation Structure Overview to recruit for the School's planned growth of the staff, by department, through to 2023-24 based on the expected numbers of students being enrolled during this period.

151 Governance and Academic Regulations indicate that staff are appointed by the Faculty Recruitment Process on the basis of their qualifications, relevant experience, and suitability for a specified role. The Organisation Structure Overview and Staff Handbook describe the staffing structures and roles that are charged with overseeing the delivery of a high-quality learning experience, specifying the associated responsibilities, key functions and relationships. The example job descriptions provided in the Academic Community Development Framework are commensurate with the delivery and support of the BASc programme and will facilitate the delivery of a high-quality academic experience. The job roles described in the Academic Community Development Framework are consistent with the qualifications and experiences of the academic (Academic Staff CVs) and professional support (Non-Academic Staff CVs) staff recruited to those roles. In addition, academic CVs confirm that all academic staff have teaching experience and hold qualifications in relevant fields that are equal to or greater than the FHEQ level they will be teaching.

152 Meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff confirmed that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Academic and professional support staff are aware of the professional development opportunities available to them and how these contribute to the delivery of a high-quality academic experience. They were also able to confirm that they had been recruited to their roles according to the School's regulations. The team concluded, therefore, that the staff recruited to the School thus far are appropriately skilled and qualified to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

Conclusions

153 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the School 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

154 The School will have sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because the regulations and process by which staff are recruited, inducted and developed is fair, reliable and likely to result in the delivery of a high-quality academic experience. The staffing structures and roles defined by the School are appropriate for the delivery of its programme. The sufficiency of staffing levels is established on the basis of calculations that account for factors such as the average hours worked in a day, the number of modules taught, expected administrative contributions, the expected number of taught sessions and anticipated student numbers. The CVs and job descriptions reviewed indicate that the School has recruited appropriately skilled and qualified staff who have appropriate experience for the roles for which they have been employed. Based on the same faculty recruitment process that had led to a large majority of academic roles being filled by staff on permanent contracts, and the plans in place for future recruitment through to 2023-24, the School has robust and credible plans to fill outstanding

roles and further develop its academic and professional support staff. The review team, therefore, concludes that this Core practice is met.

155 The observations of the review team were based upon examination of the full range of evidence described in Annex 4, with the exception of third-party endorsements, student views and direct observations of learning and teaching. These exceptions were due to the School's current stage in the programme delivery cycle. In the absence of these forms of evidence, the effectiveness of the approach to recruiting appropriately qualified and skilled staff could not be fully confirmed. However, the robustness of the School's faculty recruitment policy, staffing structures and calculations of staffing levels, as well as the experience and understanding of their roles demonstrated by staff, mitigate the absence of these forms of evidence. 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

156 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.

157 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

158 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 Governance and Academic Regulations
- b Student Handbook (Draft)
- c Quality Framework
- d Student Support Framework
- e Organisation Structure Overview
- f Academic Community Development Framework
- g Academic staff CVs
- h Non-academic staff CVs
- i Estates Plan Update for Academic Council (04/06/2020)
- j Learning Resources Plan
- k Jisc Agreements
- l LIS SHL Signed Memorandum of Agreement (06/11/2019)
- m LIS SHL Membership Agreement Extension (07/02/2020)
- n Digital Systems and IT Infrastructure Implementation Timelines
- o Student Support Staff Workload Calculator
- p Further Information on Estates Plans
- q Risk Management Policy
- r Board of Directors minutes (18/11/19)
- s Risk Register
- t Clarification Statement on Estates Timelines
- u Meeting with senior staff 1
- v Meeting with senior staff 2
- w Meeting with academic staff
- x Meeting with professional support staff
- y Final meeting with senior staff.

159 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

160 Because the School has yet to commence delivery, it was not possible for the team to scrutinise students' views (student submission, internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations) or third-party endorsements or views (for example from a PSRB or awarding organisation). It was also not possible to meet with students and, as the School has yet to complete the building of the delivery site it was also not possible to conduct a direct assessment of facilities, learning resources and support services.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

161 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

162 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the School 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 School'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.

163 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations, Quality Framework, Student Support Framework, and Estates Plan Update for Academic Council (04/06/2020), to identify how the School's facilities, learning resources and student support services will contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience.

164 The review team considered the Student Support Framework, Estates Plan Update for Academic Council (04/06/2020), Learning Resources Plan, Jisc Agreements, LIS SHL Signed Memorandum of Agreement, LIS SHL Membership Agreement Extension, Digital Systems and IT Infrastructure Implementation Timelines, Student Support Staff Workload Calculator, further information on Estates Plans, Risk Management Policy, Board of Directors minutes (18/11/19), Risk Register and Clarification Statement on Estates Timelines, to assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that they have sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

165 The review team considered the draft Student Handbook, Student Support Framework and Learning Resources Plan to identify the School's facilities, learning resources and student support services.

166 The team considered the Organisation Structure Overview and Academic Community Development Framework to determine whether the roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience.

167 The review team considered the Academic Community Development Framework, academic staff CVs and non-academic staff CVs to test whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled.

168 The team met with senior, academic and professional support staff to test whether staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

What the evidence shows

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

170 The School's approach to the development of facilities, learning resources and student support services, as expressed by the Governance and Academic Regulations, Student Support Framework and Quality Framework are closely linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students. In particular, the Student Support Framework outlines a strategy for student support that emphasises the integration of the three key strands of personal, professional, and academic support. The integration of these strands will be achieved by two primary means, the LIS Student Record System and termly meetings between academic tutors and welfare advisers. The Student Support Framework defines a set of key performance indicators relating to the sufficiency of student support services. These performance indicators are based on overall non-continuation rates and the non-continuation rates among at-risk groups. The Quality Framework defines the LIS Key Quality Cycles that the School will use to establish and monitor the sufficiency of its facilities, learning resources and support services. The review cycles account for performance indicators and the views of staff and students as part of a rolling internal audit programme and an annual review process, each of which considers the sufficiency of facilities, learning resources and student support services. It includes reviews of the scholarship and pedagogic effectiveness of faculty, staff development, student services and student resources and facilities within a comprehensive range of reporting, analysis of outcomes and thematic audits that are overseen by the Academic Council and, ultimately, the Board of Directors.

171 Within the Student Support Framework, resourcing for personal development includes social and emotional skills as well as the development of positive relationships. Each student will have a named welfare adviser to ensure student support is effectively coordinated with a careers mentor, as well as an academic tutor. Students will also have access to specialist support, including counselling, mental health, occupational health and Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) support if required. Those students identified as being at risk of non-engagement will be provided with a more highly trained and experienced welfare adviser, and key contact points are identified throughout the academic year to enable this, although the frequency of these can increase where necessary. The framework, alongside other relevant policies within the General Policies and Procedures, identifies the School's approach to student support effectively and the Quality Framework confirms the plans for this to be monitored and reviewed through the annual monitoring process to the Academic Council. These strategies are realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students.

172 It was difficult for the team to identify the level of need in relation to welfare services when the School has yet to enrol students. However, the Student Support Staff Workload Calculator shows clear consideration of the expected workload related to specific activities across the provision and the anticipated widening participation cohort. The calculator asserts that this resourcing has been compared to identified best practice in the sector. Meetings with senior staff and professional support staff confirmed that contingency would be available should the demand prove to be higher than anticipated. Senior staff asserted, however, that these plans include an increased level of support compared to other sector providers. The monitoring of resourcing for student well-being support set out in the Student Support Framework will include the analysis of survey data from students as well as the tracking of engagement in well-being activities. The team concluded that these plans appear credible, are based on consideration of good practice and should provide students with support and activities that will have a positive impact on personal development.

173 The facilities, learning resources and support services available to students are documented in the draft Student Handbook. These will include library facilities, a careers hub and careers service, student support and wellbeing, learning and study support, disability support and a personal tutor system. The breadth of the documented facilities, resources and services means that the draft Student Handbook will be an all-encompassing document

for students to locate sources of support and opportunity. Moreover, the coverage is sufficiently comprehensive with regard to support services that an individual student will be able to initiate engagement with support services for pastoral care and wellbeing, career development, complaints and appeals, student finance and academic conduct.

174 The Learning Resources Plan aims to provide the learning resources to enable student success, ensure skills development, provide robust administrative support and maintain inclusivity in delivery. The Learning Resources Plan also outlines the financial, staffing and oversight commitments of the School to resource provision. The School plans to make extensive use of open-source and open-access learning resources to achieve the aims of the Learning Resources Plan, which places emphasis on students learning to navigate and make use of such publicly available resources. The School has supplemented this approach to freely accessible learning resources by securing affiliate membership of Jisc Collections and a partnership with Senate House to provide all students with access to a range of additional learning resources. The Learning Resources Plan is supported by plans for the delivery of an information technology infrastructure, including a virtual learning environment (VLE) and student records system. The packages chosen by the School are used by several other providers in the sector and should support a high-quality academic experience by providing staff with the resources to manage key student-facing activities commensurate with those at other similar institutions. These plans identify milestones, dependencies and responsibilities for the implementation of infrastructure that is proportional to the anticipated student intake but scalable enough to support future growth, making the plans credible and realistic with regard to the anticipated first intake of students.

175 The School is yet to secure a physical site but has advanced plans for doing so and has made progress towards securing a contractual agreement by the end of 2020. The School has clearly articulated governance processes for the approval of estates planning, an overview of progress-to-date, details of outstanding work and a timeline for development until September 2021. The School has identified dependencies on regulatory process and recognises the risk associated with the uncertainty regarding the establishment of a physical site. Consistent with its Risk Management Policy, the School has documented these matters on a Risk Register and developed contingencies to provide continuity of provision by mitigating foreseeable circumstances. These contingencies leverage an existing agreement that would see the School temporarily use an existing physical site that is owned by the developer with which it is working. There is a further contingency that could see the School move to online teaching, pending the availability of an appropriate site. The combination of progress towards a contractual agreement, governance processes and risk management supports the position that the School has a credible, robust and evidence-based plan to establish a physical facility.

176 The staff roles and responsibilities outlined in the Organisation Structure Overview and Academic Community Development Framework are conducive to the delivery of a high-quality learning experience. This is because the staffing structure demonstrates that enough resource has been dedicated to student support services and the responsibilities within the student support services are clearly defined, including personal, professional and academic support mechanisms.

177 The job descriptions provided in the Academic Community Development Framework, academic staff CVs, non-academic staff CVs (including that of professional support staff) demonstrate that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their prospective roles in facilitating learning and supporting students. All academic staff have teaching experience and hold qualifications in relevant fields that are equal to or greater than the FHEQ level they will be teaching.

178 Meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff confirmed that staff have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities with respect to student support. Senior, academic and professional support staff were able to explain the variety of facilities, learning resources and support services that will be available to students, as well as how these contribute to the delivery of a high-quality academic experience.

Conclusions

179 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the School 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

180 The School has detailed and appropriate planning in place for the provision of sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because, while there is currently no contractual agreement regarding the use of a physical site, the School has comprehensive plans, oversight and documented progress towards identified milestones, the combination of which is likely to lead to the establishment of a facility before programme delivery begins. Further, the School has contingency plans to account for foreseeable circumstances, including the situation where a physical site is not secured according to schedule. The School has developed plans for the provision of learning resources, including affiliate membership of Jisc Collections and an agreement with Senate House to provide learning resources. This is in addition to existing implementations of a VLE and a student monitoring system. The School's student support services are enshrined in regulations and communicated in policies that address areas such as library access, careers, wellbeing, study support, disability support and personal tutoring. In addition, each area of student support is sufficiently resourced and operated by staff who understand their role is student support. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

181 The observations of the review team were based upon examination of the full range of evidence described in Annex 4, with the exception of a student submission, direct observation and student views on the quality of facilities, learning resources and support services. These exceptions were due to the School's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, noting that programme delivery is due to commence in Autumn 2021. In the absence of these forms of evidence, the effectiveness of the physical facilities, resources and services under assessment in delivering a high-quality academic experience could not be fully confirmed. However, the comprehensiveness of the School's plans for the establishment of sufficient facilities, learning resources and support services, alongside the substantial experience of the staff and contingency planning, mitigate the absence of these forms of evidence. 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

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

183 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

184 The review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 Framework
- b Governance and Academic Regulations
- c Academic Council Working Group Terms of Reference
- d Student Handbook (Draft)
- e Student Support Framework
- f The School's website
- g Prelaunch Engagement with Prospective Students
- h Background to Programme Development
- i Prelaunch Surveys Focus Groups and Findings
- j Admissions Background Document
- k Faculty Recruitment Process
- l Programme and Module Review & Approval Panel (PMRAP) minutes
- m Academic Council minutes 181219
- n Examples of changes made as a result of student engagement
- o Student Induction Plan Further Details
- p Meeting with senior staff
- q Meeting with academic staff
- r Meeting with professional support staff.

185 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

186 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise examples of the School changing or improving provision as a result of student engagement or students' views (student submission, internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations). It was also not possible for the team to meet with students.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

187 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

188 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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 provider'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.

189 The review team considered the Student Engagement Framework, the Governance and Academic Regulations and the Academic Council Working Group Terms of Reference to identify how the School will actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience and to consider whether the School's plans for student engagement are robust, credible and evidence based.

190 The team considered the draft Student Handbook, the Student Support Framework, the Student Induction Plan: Further Details document and the School's website to confirm how students would be engaged and how they would be made aware of opportunities for student engagement.

191 The review team considered documents related to LIS's Engagement with Prospective Students, the Background to Programme Development, Prelaunch Surveys Focus Groups and Findings, the Admissions Background Document, the Faculty Recruitment Process and Examples of Changes made as a result of Student Engagement alongside the Programme and Module Review & Approval Panel minutes and the Academic Council meeting minutes to assess the impact of the School's approach.

192 The review team held meetings with senior staff, academic staff and professional support staff to explore staff awareness of the student engagement mechanisms and to confirm plans to monitor and review these processes.

What the evidence shows

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

194 The Student Engagement Framework articulates the School's commitment to involving students as active partners in their education and their wider experience. Students will participate both individually, through the use of feedback forms and consultation, and collectively through the student representative system. The School's Student Engagement Framework draws on a range of external reference points and research, including the Higher Education Academy, in the formulation of its approach.

195 Individual student engagement will consist of modular and service-based surveys, consultation on the Access and Participation Plan and participation in the National Student Survey (NSS). An example template module evaluation form, collecting scores related to teaching, assessment, feedback and resources is included in the Student Engagement Framework. The student representative system will provide opportunities for collective student engagement. Student representatives will be elected yearly by their peers and will receive training around understanding the role and the support available, effective communication, attending deliberative committee meetings and interpreting data. All

students who are elected to boards will receive face-to-face training from the Director of Admissions and Student Support, or their nominee. The Student Voice Committee is a key mechanism for collective student engagement that is intended to provide a community of practice for student representatives and a forum for review of student voice mechanisms. The committee will include student representatives, the CEO and the School's Directors and is intended to drive quality improvements through a partnership that extends throughout the School. It will also report on the effectiveness of the student representative training.

196 The Student Engagement Framework clearly outlines the expectations for student participation in the first year, considers the training of student representatives, monitoring of student involvement and suggests the feedback loop will be closed through the publication of all non-confidential student-facing minutes on the VLE, student representatives feeding back to their peers, and through 'You Said, We Did' termly meetings. In order to monitor the effectiveness of student voice engagement, a number of key performance indicators will be used, including attendance at committees and module feedback.

197 The Governance and Academic Regulations support the information provided in the Student Engagement Framework, outlining the various participation mechanisms, including information related to the student representative system. These documents confirm that all major governance committees and working groups will contain student representatives; an assurance also evidenced in the relevant Terms of Reference within the regulations. The Governance and Academic Regulations establishes that student representatives will be elected by their peers, inducted into committees and trained. The Academic Council Working Group Terms of Reference show that the Learning Sciences Working Group also aims to include student feedback on the learning experience and propose enhancements based on this analysis. It also confirms that the Learning Resources and Property Working Group will have a student representative.

198 The draft Student Handbook outlines the expectations for student representation on committees and states that feedback will also be obtained through termly 'You Said, We Did' events, where students will be able to ask questions or give feedback on any aspect of student life at the School as well as receiving updates on changes made to module feedback forms, engagement forms and the NSS. The Induction Plan, within the Student Support Framework, suggests feedback will be collected from students after induction, and there is a planned session on the Student Voice in the induction programme, which is confirmed in The Student Induction Plan: Further Details document.

199 The School's approach and plans provide opportunities for students to engage both individually and collectively in the quality of their learning experience. The approach is clear and effective because it is based on relevant published research and good practice from the sector. The plans are credible because they provide details of a variety of mechanisms through which students will be supported to involve themselves in the enhancement of the provision at the School. They are robust because these mechanisms will be regularly monitored by the School, using relevant performance indicators.

200 At the time of the review visit, the team was unable to find detailed information on the School's website in relation to student engagement. However, the team could see links to the regulations, which contain some relevant information, including the Terms of Reference for the Student Voice Committee. As the review visit took place approximately 15 months before the planned enrolment of the first students, the team agreed that the evidence in relation to this might be expected to be limited.

201 Although the School has yet to enrol students, it outlined examples where engagement with prospective students had taken place at open events, which is indicative of a commitment to actively involving students as relevant stakeholders. This engagement

resulted in changes to the future student experience. The School's Prelaunch Engagement with Prospective Students document, the Background to Programme Development document, the Prelaunch Surveys Focus Groups and Findings and the Admissions Background Document outline where prospective students have been consulted by the School. While the majority of this activity is related to marketing and recruitment rather than engaging students in the quality of their educational experience, specific examples of changes are outlined, including the introduction of a 'Skills for Sustainability' Level 6 module and the development of marketing and recruitment information. In addition to this the Programme and Module Review & Approval Panel and the Academic Council meeting minutes provide evidence of the presence of an external student representative and prospective students have also been engaged in the faculty recruitment process.

202 Meetings with staff confirmed the plans for student engagement, including how these will be monitored, reviewed and shared with students to ensure that the feedback loop is closed. Academic and professional support staff demonstrated considerable experience and their understanding of their role in student engagement as well as a commitment to the use of such engagement to enhance the provision. Professional support staff confirmed that the training for student representatives, outlined in the Student Engagement Framework, would be key to ensuring effective student engagement. Particular thought had clearly been given to encouraging the integration of all students into these processes. Senior staff articulated their understanding and commitment to engaging with students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

Conclusions

203 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

204 The School has a clear framework for actively engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. The School has clear and credible plans through its Student Engagement Framework that include strategies for engaging students to ensure a robust and effective approach to student engagement. Although it has yet to commence delivery, the School has outlined mechanisms to ensure students can engage both individually and collectively in quality assurance through the student representative system and various feedback mechanisms, including module surveys. While the School has yet to enrol students, there have already been examples of engagement with prospective students that have resulted in changes and improvements to the provision. Staff show a clear commitment to using student engagement to shape the learning experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

205 The lack of evidence relating to the views of students and the limited evidence of the School acting upon student feedback, while reflecting the School's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, means that the effectiveness of the student engagement system could not be fully tested. Nonetheless, the evidence seen by the review team demonstrates a clear intent to provide a range of mechanisms for student feedback, individually and collectively, and for analysing and acting upon this in partnership with students. The formative engagement that has taken place before delivery commences demonstrates this commitment in action, and so 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

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

207 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

208 The review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 Governance and Academic Regulations
- b Student Handbook (Draft)
- c Admissions Communication
- d Student Support Framework
- e Staff Handbook
- f LIS Professional Development Programme (draft)
- g LIS website - www.londoninterdisciplinarieschool.org. Accessed 18-21 May 2020
- h Meeting with senior staff
- i Meeting with senior staff
- j Meeting with academic staff
- k Meeting with professional support staff.

209 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

210 Because the School has yet to commence delivery, there were no complaints or appeals for the team to consider. It was also not possible for the team to meet with students.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

211 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

212 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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 provider'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.

213 The review team considered the Governance and Academic Regulations to identify the School's processes for handling complaints and appeals and to confirm that these processes are fair and transparent.

214 The team scrutinised the Governance and Academic Regulations, the Staff Handbook and the draft LIS Professional Development Programme to assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for developing and operating fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

215 The review team considered the draft Student Handbook, Admissions Communication, Student Support Framework and the School's website to consider whether information related to appeals and complaints will be clear and accessible to students.

216 The review team held meetings with senior staff, academic staff and professional support staff and consideration was given to the draft LIS Professional Development Programme and Staff Handbook to test understanding of the appeals and complaints procedures, to clarify the monitoring and review processes and to clarify plans for ensuring that information for students in relation to appeals and complaints is clear and accessible.

What the evidence shows

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

218 The School's Governance and Academic Regulations include the Academic Appeals Procedure which sets out the definition and grounds for an academic appeal. The procedure that is detailed is a three-stage process. The first stage of the process allows the student to seek clarification of an assessment decision and to discuss their concerns with a nominated member of staff. The second stage is to lodge an appeal, with the required information as outlined clearly in the procedure, to allow for initial consideration of the appeal by the Registrar or their nominee, who will investigate the formal appeal, provided they have no material interest in the outcome of the complaint. The Registrar will determine whether the information presented by the student constitutes a case that satisfies the threshold conditions for a valid appeal. If it is accepted, the final stage is for the Academic Appeals Board to consider the appeal. Each stage is explained, and timeframes are provided. The procedure includes information for students who remain unsatisfied so that they can progress their concerns to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). An annual report will be made to the Academic Council of the appeals that have been brought and the outcomes of these cases, as well as a review of the effectiveness of this procedure and recommendations for any changes. Outcomes of the Registrar's review and a summary of actions taken and changes made will also be shared with staff and students.

219 The Students Complaints Procedure is also included in the School's Governance and Academic Regulations and sets out what would be considered to be a complaint and addressed under the procedure as well as signposting where issues may more appropriately be considered under alternative processes such as the Academic Appeals Procedure or the Applicants Complaints and Appeals Procedure. A three-stage process is outlined, with the first stage being an informal resolution. Students will be encouraged to resolve their complaint quickly and informally at a local level. Potential resolutions are explained within the document, as well as the option to escalate to a formal stage. The second stage of the process is the formal complaint. This should commence with an email to the Registrar, which would then be acknowledged, and a formal investigation would be initiated. The Registrar or

their nominee will investigate the formal complaint, provided they have no material interest in the outcome of the complaint. On receipt of a formal complaint email, it is the Registrar's responsibility to clarify with the student his or her expectations for the process and also what outcome the student is hoping for. Any oral representations would be recorded alongside formal communications. If considered necessary, the Registrar will submit the complaint to another independent staff member for a second opinion before communicating their conclusions to the student. Where the student is satisfied with the Registrar's response, the complaint is deemed to have been resolved. The final stage is to appeal to the School's Chief Executive for a review if not satisfied with the outcome at the formal second stage. Information is also provided for those students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome at the end of this process and how they may be able to apply for a review to the OIAHE. All stages are set out clearly for students, with appropriate and clear timeframes provided. As with Academic Appeals, an annual report will be made to the Academic Council on the complaints that have been brought and the outcomes of these cases, as well as a review of the effectiveness of this procedure and recommendations for any changes. Outcomes of the Registrar's review and a summary of actions taken, and changes made will also be shared with staff and students. In this way, the Academic Council maintains oversight of the monitoring of these processes.

220 The School's processes are fair and transparent as appropriate stages are clearly outlined within the relevant procedures, with timeframes provided. The School's plans to develop fair and transparent procedures are credible as they clearly set out the criteria for both appeals and complaints and provide information relevant to each stage of these processes. The processes provide for the monitoring and review of appeals and complaints. They also allow for the School to address any issues raised by appeals or complaints made by students. There is also provision for monitoring of the procedures themselves, through annual reporting to, and oversight by, the Academic Council. These plans are robust because the Governance and Academic Regulations set out both process and timings for the monitoring and analysis of appeals and complaints processes throughout the document including in the Terms of Reference of the Academic Council, the Academic Appeals procedure and the Complaints procedure.

221 The draft Student Handbook, which will be available to students on the VLE, contains information relating to how to make a complaint or appeal, which procedure should be followed and signposting for students to the relevant procedure; this includes information about the OIAHE.

222 The Induction Schedule, outlined in the Student Support Framework, confirms that appeals and complaints procedures will be addressed with students in their first week. In addition to this, the relevant procedures are available on the School's website. This suggests that the accessibility of information for students in relation to both appeals and complaints has been considered within the planning for delivery, commencing in September 2021 and that students should be able to find and understand these procedures quickly and easily.

223 Meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff confirmed clear and consistent understanding of both the appeals and complaints procedures. Senior, academic and professional support staff demonstrated that they could identify their roles within these processes. Academic and professional support staff informed the review team that they had already received training around academic complaints and appeals and reported that they saw complaints as an opportunity for development for the School once delivery commences. The team did note that this training is not explicitly outlined as mandatory in the Staff Handbook or the draft LIS Professional Development Programme. The meeting with senior staff confirmed the plans in place for the monitoring and review of complaints and appeals processes. Staff at all levels within the School were able to articulate the various ways in which students would be made aware of the complaints and appeals procedures including

their awareness of their role to support this. Overall, staff demonstrated a thorough understanding and awareness of the policies and procedures; they could identify their roles within these processes and confirmed their commitment to complaints and appeals processes that will be accessible for all students.

Conclusions

224 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

225 The School has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals, which will be accessible to all students. This is because the plans and procedures in relation to appeals and complaints are definitive, fair and transparent, with clear stages and timeframes. The School has credible and robust plans for monitoring and reporting on complaints and appeals received and a review of the complaints and appeals processes, as well as ensuring that relevant information is accessible to students. Staff confirm that the training that they have received is appropriate. They demonstrated their understanding of the relevant policies and procedures and are aware of their role in these processes. Students will be able to find and understand these procedures quickly and easily. The review team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

226 The lack of evidence relating to the views of students and data on complaints and appeals, while reflecting the School's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, means that the effectiveness of the implementation of the procedures could not be fully tested. Nonetheless, the relevant policies, plans and information provided to students were robust, and the staff were very knowledgeable in all meetings with the review team. This led the team to have a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

228 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

229 The review team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider 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 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 Governance and Academic Regulations
- b Access and Participation plan
- c Student Handbook (Draft)
- d Quality Framework
- e Student Support Framework
- f Academic Community Development Framework
- g General Policies and Procedures
- h Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- i Staff Handbook
- j Academic staff CVs
- k Non-academic staff CVs
- l Internship examples
- m Student Support Staff Workload Calculator
- n The Draft Internship Commitment documentation
- o Structure of Internships
- p Internship Clarification minutes
- q Internship examples updated
- r The Induction Plans: Further Detail document
- s LIS Super Tutor System document (draft)
- t Clarification on Internship Allocation
- u Meeting with senior staff
- v Meeting with senior staff
- w Meeting with academic staff
- x Meeting with professional support staff
- y Final meeting with senior staff
- z LIS website - www.londoninterdisciplinarieschool.org. Accessed 18-21 May 2020.

230 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

231 Because the School has yet to commence delivery it was not possible for the team to scrutinise students' views (student submission; internal and external surveys; module and course evaluations) or assessed student work. It was also not possible to meet with students.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

232 The review team did not sample any further evidence as the School has yet to commence delivery and exhaustive consideration could be given to the evidence provided.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

233 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider 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 provider'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.

234 The review team explored the Access and Participation Plan, the Student Support Framework, the General Policies and Procedures, the Governance and Academic Regulations and the Quality Framework to identify the School's approach to student support, including how it identifies and monitors the needs of individual students.

235 The review team considered the Student Support Framework, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, the draft LIS Super Tutor System document, the General Policies and Procedures and the Student Support Staff Workload Calculator, alongside documents relating to the internship opportunities, including the Clarification on Internship Allocation, Internship examples, Internship Examples updated, the Draft Internship Commitment documentation, Structure of Internships and the Internship Clarification minutes. Meetings with senior staff, academic staff, professional support staff and the final meeting with senior staff were also convened in order to assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

236 The review team considered the Student Support Framework, the Academic Community Development Framework, Academic Staff CVs, Non-Academic Staff CVs and the Staff Handbook, and held meetings with senior staff, academic staff and professional support staff to explore whether staff understood their responsibilities and were appropriately skilled and supported.

What the evidence shows

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

238 According to the Access and Participation Plan, the School's strategic aim is to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment in which all students, whatever their background, are able to achieve their full potential. The School asserts that their inclusive approach to teaching and learning and its integral focus on student support will aid academic and professional success and the Access and Participation Plan outlines its strategic measures to enable this.

239 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, included within the General Policies and Procedures and available on the School website, emphasises a commitment to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working and studying environment for both staff and

students. The policy sets out the principles to be followed by the School and outlines roles and responsibilities concerning this. The Board of Directors has ultimate accountability for compliance with the School's equality obligations and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee has overall formal responsibility for this policy and its implementation. The Disability Policy, also found in the General Policies and Procedures document and on the website, outlines the School's duties and the options available to both students and staff with disabilities. Disclosure, student support plans and reasonable adjustments are considered, alongside roles and responsibilities of the Board and staff, which are in line with those in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The Disability Policy also states that the Heads of Departments and others in management positions are responsible for ensuring that this policy and the legal framework are communicated effectively. The policies are well considered in relation to inclusivity and facilitating successful academic and professional outcomes.

240 The Student Support Framework details the measures for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. It states that supporting students through an effective and integrated 'multi-channel approach' is central to the School's mission and values. The School's model for student support has three dimensions: academic development, personal development and professional development. This will be provided through all students having an academic tutor, a welfare adviser and a careers mentor, rather than a single personal tutor. The School asserts that this will provide a greater level of specialised support for all students while allowing the School to identify and provide more intensive support for students where and when necessary.

241 The Student Support Framework details a number of strategies to enable students to achieve successful academic outcomes. All students will complete a short Success Plan, once per term, which is designed to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as actions to help students to agree with their academic tutor strategies to help them address particular challenges, such as academic or research skills. Students have two meetings per term with their academic tutor, which would provide opportunities to review these plans.

242 Students who are not making satisfactory progress can be referred to their academic tutor by staff who have concerns. The Academic Progress Policy details that the academic tutor will review the student's progress with the student, and develop a Learning Plan to address these concerns. The purpose of the Learning Plan is to facilitate the coordination of appropriate information and support for students which could include liaising with the Director of Admissions and Student Support or other staff to determine what additional support can be provided. In more serious cases, this approach also allows an academic tutor to place a student under review, which would then allow the placement of conditions to specify how the student may progress on the course. The Academic Progress Policy also details how this measure can elevate a student's case to the Director of Teaching and Learning, should they fail to achieve the conditions placed upon them. It provides, with associated timescales, information for the student and specified routes to support students to progress on the course, but also that which could lead to the termination of their registration if the Director of Teaching and Learning deems this to be appropriate.

243 The Student Support Framework also includes information about supporting students with specific learning differences. This predominantly outlines the consideration of reasonable adjustments and support for students. This begins with pre-registration activity, including opportunities for the disclosure of additional learning needs, and through the recruitment and selection process. This approach should ensure that students will be supported through the framework and that assessment practices will be adjusted appropriately and proportionately. The framework asserts that the School takes a holistic view to help students integrate their personal, academic and professional development 'to explore and reach their potential in these various aspects of their lives'. Students with

Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) will have a Student Support Plan. In these cases, students and academic tutors will work together to devise strategies to help students address individual challenges that they face and the reasonable adjustments that can be made for them.

244 The Student Support Framework introduces the concept of students 'at risk' of non-engagement and, therefore, of non-continuation. Any student deemed to be 'at risk' will receive the same support, detailed above, but from a more highly trained member of staff. This approach uses a model of 'super tutors' developed at other institutions including Aston University. A 'super tutor' is a member of staff who has received additional training or has specific expertise in the areas of Widening Participation and/or Student Success. Super tutors can provide additional intensive support for students who are deemed to be 'at risk'.

245 The framework describes the groups of students that may be considered 'at risk', showing consideration of student background and any identified learning needs. These will be identified during the admission process onwards. Information will be recorded on the School's student record system to enable coordination between appropriate members of staff. The draft LIS Super Tutor System document provides detail regarding the training, allocation and function of this role, outlining flags that would lead to the allocation of a super tutor as well as additional training for tutors that will include supporting SpLD students and exploring case studies on 'students in crisis'.

246 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy outlines approaches to assessment and feedback. It acknowledges the role that prompt and developmental feedback can play in order for students to progress and to manage their individual learning. This document sets out the approach of the School, stating that feedback should be provided within two weeks of submission, that it should contain indications on how to improve future performance and that it needs to be provided in time for students to reflect on their performance before the next assessment. When academic staff met with the team, they were able to articulate the importance of timely and developmental feedback generally, but also in the context of students' in-year progression on the BAsC programme as well as through the three years of the course. Although the School is over 15 months away from enrolling its first cohort, the review team determined from these plans, and the role that the academic staff will play in this, that assessment feedback is likely to be comprehensive, helpful and timely.

247 The key principles of students' personal development are outlined in the Student Wellbeing Framework. This details a range of activities to foster wellbeing and personal development among students, including a personal development programme, diversity training, mental health and wellbeing support, as well as social and extracurricular activities. Activities related to key strands of the Student Wellbeing Framework are outlined, showing consideration for the whole student lifespan.

248 The Induction Plan within the framework sets out an induction schedule that includes introductions to key support services; this should aid the transition for students into studying at the School and provide relevant information to them.

249 The School's plans to support students to achieve successful professional outcomes are detailed within the Student Careers Framework of the Student support Framework. Each student is assigned a careers mentor to support them in their professional development journey throughout the course and in preparing for employment. The role of the careers mentor is to support students to prepare for employment through a range of strategies including developing a professional identity, identifying passions and career aspirations, developing practical professional skills and competencies and soft skills in a professional context. The School also has plans to encourage alumni to remain part of the

School's community as well as a programme of professional development workshops, discussions, panels and guest talks by professionals as well as site visits for students to learn more about a sector, industry or company.

250 A novel feature of the School's provision is the opportunity to undertake internships every Summer that are 'brokered' by the School. This will commence when the first cohort finishes Level 4 in the Summer of 2022. The School views the internship experience as helpful for reinforcing its careers framework and, therefore, professional outcomes for students. Its conception of brokering involves playing a supportive role in the internship process to enable students from the School to identify, access and secure internship opportunities. These internships are not part of the formal curriculum, are not credit-bearing and are not assessed. There is no requirement for students to take up internships. The School will strongly encourage students to make use of such opportunities. However, it provides a range of activities to support students to achieve successful professional outcomes during term time, detailed above. This aspect of the student experience is displayed prominently on the School's website and would appear, therefore, to be an important part of the experience for its students. For this reason, the review team felt it appropriate to examine this aspect of the provision to confirm that students will be supported appropriately.

251 The role of the School as a broker of the internships is carefully articulated in the School's documentation submitted for the review, including in the draft Student Handbook, the Governance and Academic Regulations, the Student Support Framework, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, the Draft Internship Commitment and in a clarification statement requested by the team during the visit. Although the School does take a role in 'curating and brokering' options for students, it limits its involvement to identifying appropriate opportunities to ensure that both students and employers will be likely to be satisfied. The internship, however, remains an agreement strictly between employer and employee. The School does not consider this approach to constitute a formal partnership with employers and as such did not address the Core practice Q8 (where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them) in its submission for the QSR. The review team agreed that the proposed arrangements with employers that provide internships would not represent a formal partnership as the relationship will be between the employer and the student as an employee. More importantly, however, support for students to achieve successful professional outcomes is not dependent on this scheme as the School has a range of activities for students to engage with employers in meaningful ways, and to consider and develop their employability during their studies.

252 Appendix F of the Student Support Framework identifies that it is the responsibility of the Senior Student Support Manager to ensure that regular meetings take place between each student's tutors and mentors to ensure the alignment of the School's approach to supporting their personal, professional and academic development as well as identifying students 'at risk'. This coordination should allow for the different aspects of the School's support to combine to provide the holistic approach emphasised in the Student Support Framework.

253 Information for students about the support available to them is provided in the draft Student Handbook. This includes the allocation of an academic tutor and welfare adviser. Within the draft Student Handbook, student well-being activities are outlined, and career development activities are discussed. Information is also provided relating to assessment and feedback and the time period within which students can expect to receive feedback for their submissions.

254 The School's website contains information related to career development, outlining the support and opportunities available. At the time of this review, there was limited explicit information in relation to support for academic outcomes; as outlined above, the website does place a clear emphasis on the importance of careers, and the internship opportunities are prominent within this. The meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff all confirmed that students would be provided with information about the support available to them through various platforms, including during the induction process, through the VLE and within relevant handbooks. The Induction Plans: Further Detail document does identify that students will meet with their academic tutor and welfare adviser early in the induction process and the activities outlined suggest support should be easily accessible to students. While the review team was unable to meet with current students, the information provided does suggest there are plans in place to ensure that information and support is accessible.

255 The Quality Framework sets out the quality mechanisms in place to ensure effective monitoring and review student support. It states that a student support review will be included as part of the annual review of student services to the Board and that the Director of Student Support reports to the Academic Council on student support. Key data sets are highlighted, including student surveys, retention data and destination surveys. The Student Support Framework confirms that key performance indicators related to non-continuation are outlined to monitor support performance. Other measurements to monitor the different support processes are outlined throughout, such as the use of student satisfaction data and student attendance.

256 The functioning of the super tutor system will be reviewed annually through interviews with tutors and selected students, with an annual report being provided for consideration by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Student Support Framework outlines key contact points with academic tutors throughout the student lifecycle. The effectiveness of academic tutoring will be monitored through student survey data and tracking the percentage of meetings completed. Employability support will be monitored through engagement with the above careers-based activities, student satisfaction rates and internship engagement rates. Monitoring in relation to student well-being support will be accomplished through the monitoring of survey data and tracking of engagement in well-being activities. The above provides a framework for support to be provided, when the School admits students in September 2021, that the team found to be credible. The proposed monitoring of these systems should ensure that they are robust.

257 All staff confirmed they had received appropriate training and could explain their role in supporting students effectively. Academic staff were able to describe their role in providing timely and effective feedback and how this will link to the students' Success Plans. Professional support staff were able to articulate their role in identifying and providing a flexible level of support according to the needs of individual students. While there are no CVs available for careers mentors or welfare advisers, due to the review taking place before plans for them to be recruited, the CVs for academic staff and professional support staff highlight that they have appropriate experience to undertake their roles in relation to student support. The Organisation Structure Overview includes a recruitment plan that includes key job descriptions and details for the School's planned growth of the staff, by department, through to 2023-24. This provides evidence that staff are appropriately skilled and will be able to support students as the School scales up to delivering all three levels of the programme.

Conclusions

258 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

259 The School has plans in place to support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The Student Support Framework is a comprehensive document that identifies the School's plans and approach to support students, which should facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes. The plans to support students include the allocation of skilled support staff, the provision of effective feedback and a variety of well-being and career-focused activities. These plans are comprehensive, robust and credible. Relevant staff are appropriately skilled and developed and understand their role, and the information provided suggests support will be easily accessible to students. The review team agreed that, although there was significant emphasis on internships in the information supplied to prospective students, support for them to achieve successful professional outcomes is not dependent on this scheme as the School provides a range of other appropriate activities. The review team concludes, therefore, that the School will support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that this Core practice is met.

260 The lack of evidence in relation to assessed student work and student views, while reflecting the School 's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, precluded the team from confirming that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback and that they agree they are adequately supported. These are difficult to explore when the School is over a year away from delivering most of these activities and over two years in the case of the proposed internships scheme. However, the evidence demonstrating a commitment to prompt developmental feedback and easy accessibility to support, allied to the realistic plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes, result in the team having a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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