

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

University Centre Quayside

Review Report

October 2019



Working as the Designated Quality Body for England

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Summary of findings and reasons

Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
S1	The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	Met	High	<p>From the evidence seen, the review team considers that the standards set for UCQ's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. The review team also considers that the standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and UCQ's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The review team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by UCQ's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. Based on this information the review team also considers that UCQ's academic regulations and policies will ensure that these standards are maintained. The review team considers that staff fully understand UCQ's approach to maintaining these standards and that the evidence seen demonstrates they are committed to implementing this approach. Therefore, based on its scrutiny of the evidence provided, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>
S2	The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	High	The review team, based on the evidence presented, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on UCQ's courses 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 UCQ's academic regulations and policies should ensure that

				<p>such standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and this Core practice is met.</p>
S3	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	Met	High	<p>UCQ has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where, or how, courses are delivered or who delivers them. This is because it has a clear and comprehensive General Regulations document that details the management of the partnership with its validating university and other organisations and ensures that the standards of awards are credible and secure. Its plans to secure standards in provision delivered in partnership are robust and credible because they are founded on the requirements of the validating body and of the CMDA, and are reflected in UCQ's General Regulations; they are evidence-based because the annual monitoring process is based on regular evaluative review of UCQ's provision. The partnership agreements are clear, comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect UCQ's General Regulations for the management of partnerships. The external examiner for the programme confirms that the standards of awards delivered in partnership are credible and secure and staff at UCQ understand their respective responsibilities for academic standards. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>

S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High	UCQ uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. This is because it has clear and comprehensive regulations for assessment and classification, and has a credible, robust and evidence-based approach to using external expertise in maintaining academic standards. Procedures for marking, moderation and standardisation are credible, robust and evidence-based. Approved course documentation sets out assessment and classification processes which are reliable, fair and transparent. UCQ has a credible, robust and evidence-based approach to using external expertise in maintaining academic standards. Academic staff understand and use the external expertise and UCQ's assessment and classification processes, and students regard assessment and classification processes as fair and transparent. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.
Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High	UCQ has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because it has clear policies for the recruitment and admission of students which are reliable, fair and inclusive. Its plans for ensuring that its systems are reliable, fair and inclusive are robust and credible and students tend to agree with this assessment. Admissions records demonstrate that the provider's policies are implemented in practice. Teaching and professional support staff involved in admissions understand their role and employers that work with UCQ confirm that the process is fair and reliable. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.

Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	<p>UCQ designs and delivers high-quality courses. This is because it has regulations from the OU, and institutional policies for course design that facilitate high-quality course delivery. Approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Meetings with students confirmed to the review team that students regard their courses as being of high quality. Staff and employers, who met the team, supported this assessment: the staff, by being able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of the provider and the course; employers, by supporting students' views about the course and its role in empowering students in their working roles. External examiner reports and the team's own observations of teaching and learning further support the team's judgement that the provider delivers a high-quality course. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	<p>UCQ has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because its approach to supporting staff is credible, robust and evidence-based. The OU, as the awarding body, has positive views about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of UCQ's staff, and students consider staff to be sufficiently skilled and qualified to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Academic staff are suitably qualified and experienced to perform their roles effectively and observations of teaching and learning show that academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience. The review team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>

Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	Moderate	<p>UCQ has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because the review team's assessment of facilities and learning resources confirms that UCQ is addressing the particular demands of the wide geographic distribution of its students to provide a high-quality academic experience. This view is supported by students who tend to regard facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate; nevertheless, outcomes of surveys of students' views indicate that students collectively have some concerns about the availability or effectiveness of learning resources or facilities.</p> <p>Employers consider that UCQ provides sufficient and appropriate facilities and learning resources to support student achievement and provide a high-quality academic experience. Academic and professional staff are aware of how to make effective use of learning resources in supporting students. Although UCQ places heavy reliance on the OU for assuring the sufficiency and appropriateness of its learning resources rather than on an independently-developed strategy, the team considered that its resources are sufficient. The review team therefore concludes that on balance, this Core practice is met.</p>
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Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	UCQ actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because, although there are no formal arrangements for student engagement this is mitigated by the small scale of the provision and UCQ's approach is clear and effective. There are examples of UCQ changing students' learning experience as a result of student engagement and students have generally positive views about their engagement in the quality of their educational experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q6	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	High	UCQ has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. This is because UCQ's policies are fair and transparent, and its approach to operating its procedures is credible and robust, although they are not evidence-based because the procedures have not yet been used. Students do not raise any serious concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures, and agree that procedures are clear and accessible. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q8	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.	Met	High	UCQ 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. This is because UCQ has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience for provision for its students that ensure that UCQ academic and professional support staff are in control of the delivery of its programme throughout the student journey. It also has clear and comprehensive policies for the management of partnerships with its students' employers, and with the OU, to ensure a high-quality experience.

				Partnership agreements seen by the team are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect the provider's regulations. External examiner reports and employers confirm that the academic experience is high quality, and staff from UCQ and from the OU, as well as representatives of employers, understand their responsibilities for the delivery of a high quality programme. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	UCQ supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because its approach to student support focuses on such outcomes and its plans to support students to achieve are evidence-based, robust and credible. The team noted that students were consistent in agreeing that they are adequately supported to achieve, and the assessed student work seen by the team demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. It was clear to the team that staff (both academic and professional support) understand their role in supporting student achievement. The review team concludes, therefore, 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 October 2019, for University Centre Quayside.

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 John Byrom
Institution: University of Warwick
Role in review team: Institutional reviewer

Name: Dr Dave Britnell
Institution: University of Liverpool Management School
Role in review team: Subject reviewer, Business and Management

Name: Mr Anthony Aldred
Institution: University of Leeds
Role in review team: Subject reviewer, Business and Management

QAA Officer: Mr Kevin Kendall.

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

About University Centre Quayside

University Centre Quayside (UCQ) was established in 1994 and is a private independent provider of further and higher education. It first delivered higher education in September 2016. UCQ employs approximately 30 staff and delivers work-based learning provision. It is an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) contract holder, a Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) devolved adult skills budget-holder and a registered provider of apprenticeship training. UCQ was one of the first organisations to deliver the Level 6 Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship Trailblazer (CMDA). The CMDA is delivered to levy-paying employers across England with centres in Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and London. Students entering the apprenticeship are also enrolled

onto the BA (Hons) in Professional Management, the single programme delivered by UCQ, which is validated by the Open University (OU) through its Validation Partnerships (OUVP).

The programme has been developed with employers to enable flexible, contextualised delivery with experiential learning. Students are not required to have regular attendance at a UCQ Centre. They have online learning, tutorials, workplace mentoring, and self-study supported by face-to-face taught sessions once every three to four weeks. The taught sessions can take place either at a UCQ Centre or at the workplace. Students can also commence their studies throughout the year. Employer partners include Santander UK, CSG, OCS Group UK, and Maersk Training.

The Academic Council is the principal academic body and oversees the planning, coordination, development and supervision of all academic work. Student Services are responsible for programme management and quality assurance and they report through the Vice Principal to the Principal.

There are currently 44 full-time students enrolled on the BA(Hons) Professional Management across the six centres.

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 provider does not offer a research degree programme. Therefore, the review team did not consider Q7 (where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments).

To form its judgements about the 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. 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 sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this review, the review team sampled the following areas for evidence for the reasons given below:

- Approved course documentation: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the documentation for this programme, specifically the programme specification, module guides and the student handbook.
- Admission records: a random sample of 48 admission records was examined by the review team.
- External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ.
- Assessed student work: the review team examined a representative sample of 36

pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules that have been delivered by the Centre so far. This included high, average and low grades for each module.

- Partnership Agreements: no sampling was necessary as UCQ has a single validating partner, the OU. The review team examined the documentation relating to this partner, specifically the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University. UCQ has agreements with employers and the team examined a sample of four agreements with employers, specifically the Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreements.
- Observation of teaching and learning: the review team observed two sessions, chosen to be representative of UCQ's provision, specifically a lecture at the Newcastle Centre and a webinar session in which a single student participated from their workplace.
- Student views: no sampling was necessary as the Centre offers a single programme. The review team examined the student submission and the results of the internal Quayside Student Survey.
- Job descriptions and details of postholders: the review team examined the job descriptions and CVs of all nine members of higher education teaching staff.
- Examples of complaints and appeals: no sampling was possible as the Centre has not received any complaints or appeals.

Further details of all the evidence the review team considered are provided in Annex 1 of this report.

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 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 General Regulations - V3
- b Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy - V3
- c BA (Hons) Professional Management - Programme specification
- d Guiding Principles for Monitoring and Evaluation
- e Annual Monitoring Flow Chart
- f Annual Programme review
- g Template for Annual Programme Data
- h Terms of reference and composition of the Quality and Standards Committee
- i UCQ Committee structure
- j Minutes of the Academic Council
- k Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee
- l Board of Examiners Membership and Specialisms
- m Report from an OU-appointed academic reviewer
- n Programme specification
- o Module 1.1 - Academic Skills Module Guide - V3
- p Module 1.2 - Leading People - Module Guide - V4
- q Module 1.3 - Communication - Module Guide - V3

r	Module 1.4 - Sales - Marketing - Module Guide - V4
s	Module 1.5 - Decision Making - Module Guide - V3
t	Module 1.6 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V4
u	Module 2.1 - Managing People - Module Guide - V3
v	Module 2.2 - Business Finance - Module Guide - V4
w	Module 2.3 - New Technologies - Module Guide - V4
x	Module 2.4 - Digital Business - Module Guide - V4
y	Module 2.5 - Developing Collaborative Relationships - Module Guide - V3
z	Module 2.6 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V5
aa	Module 3.1 - Strategy - Change - Module Guide - V3
bb	Module 3.2 - Project Management - Module Guide - V3
cc	Module 3.3 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V3
dd	Module 3.4 - Management Project - Module Guide - V3
ee	UCQ Examination Board 24-7-19 - External Examiner's Report
ff	UCQ Examination Board 24-5-19 - External Examiner's Report
gg	UCQ Examination Board 13-7-18 - External Examiner's Report
hh	UCQ Examination Board 22-2-18 - External Examiner's Report
ii	UCQ - 17-18 - Annual Institutional Overview - 2017-18_TH 31-01-19
jj	17-18 - Org Chart - UCQ 2017-18
kk	Assessed student work
ll	Meeting with teaching and professional support staff
mm	The Open University's list of partner institutions.

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 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

7 Approved course documentation: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the documentation for this programme, specifically the programme specification, module guides and the student handbook.

8 External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ.

9 Assessed student work: the review team examined a representative sample of 36 pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules being delivered by the Centre. This included high, average and low grades for each module.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

10 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.

11 The review team scrutinised UCQ's General Regulations to identify the institutional approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification as the underlying basis for the standards of awards.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy was examined for details of the provider's approach to assessment design.

12 To interrogate the robustness and credibility of UCQ's plans for ensuring standards, the review team examined the Guiding Principles for Monitoring and Evaluation, the Annual Monitoring Flow Chart, the 2017-18 - UCQ Annual Monitoring Flow Chart, an example of the Annual Institutional Overview from 2017-18 and the Annual Programme review from the same year, the template used for Annual Programme Data, terms of reference and composition of the Quality and Standards Committee, the UCQ Committee structure, minutes of the Academic Council, minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee, the Board of Examiners Membership and Specialisms, and a report from an OU-appointed academic reviewer.

13 To test that specified standards for the qualification offered at UCQ are consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks, the review team scrutinised the approved course documentation including the programme specification and module guides, as well as the OU's list of partner institutions.

14 The review team read external examiner reports to check that UCQ's standards are consistent with national qualifications' frameworks, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those sector-recognised standards have been met.

15 Assessed student work from different levels of the programme was reviewed in order to test that students' assessed work reflects the relevant sector-recognised standards.

16 The views of teaching staff involved in assessment, including those of a professional development assessor, were considered in order to understand how staff apply UCQ's approach to maintaining standards.

What the evidence shows

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

18 To understand the framework for the standards being applied by UCQ for the qualification that it offers, the review team examined UCQ's General Regulations. This document has been developed by UCQ from a template provided by OUVP and confirms that the relationship between UCQ and the OUVP is governed by the Quality Code. The regulations define the award that UCQ offers, referencing the FHEQ at Level 6. It also confirms the use of the UK credit-based system for the course, which it indexes to its European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) equivalent. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy describes UCQ's approach to assessment design, including its commitment to multiple assessment methods to counter any potential bias involved in using a single approach, to taking steps to limit or prevent academic misconduct, and to the alignment of assessments to learning outcomes. The regulations also describe UCQ's approach to marking and moderation of assessed work, and to the classification of awards. Taken together, these documents are clear and comprehensive in identifying the institutional approach to course and assessment design, to marking, moderation and the classification of awards, and to the requirements for the award offered by UCQ as the underlying basis for the standard of the award UCQ delivers on behalf of the OU.

19 The membership of the Board of Examiners (BoE) and the Board's areas of expertise are described in BoE Membership and Specialisms. The BoE is the deliberative committee at UCQ authorised to consider student grades and to determine their progression and the conferment of awards under the General Regulations. It does so under the clear and definitive processes for marking and moderation of assessed work and for the classification of awards set out in the General Regulations. The composition of the Board, in line with the

General Regulations, consists of UCQ academic staff and the external examiner for the programme, as well as a member staff of the OU to enable oversight of the Board's work by the awarding body. The BoE reports to UCQ's Academic Council, the senior academic committee responsible for oversight of all UCQ's higher education activities, whose minutes show that it receives reports from other committees including the Quality and Standards Committee and the Regulatory Compliance Committee, as well as verbal reports about the BoE's deliberations from the chair of the BoE.

20 UCQ undertakes annual monitoring of its provision using templates provided by the OU for both an institutional exercise and a programme review that includes a statistical summary of its performance. Annual monitoring is informed by input from an independent academic reviewer appointed by the OU as well as by student feedback arising from module evaluations, and is guided by UCQ's Guiding Principles for Monitoring and Evaluation and by the process outlined in the Annual Monitoring Flow Chart.

21 The terms of reference of the Quality and Standards Committee show that it is responsible for UCQ's approach to quality and standards within UCQ; however, its composition and its chair are unspecified, leading to a risk that its membership may not be suited to its role. Nevertheless, the minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee show that it carries out its role in overseeing actions arising from annual monitoring. UCQ's approach to ensuring standards is robust because it is set out in its General Regulations and embedded in the reporting lines of its committee structure, and is credible because minutes of the Academic Council and the Quality and Standards Committee show oversight of its approach.

22 The programme specification for the BA (Hons) Professional Management, details the educational aims and objectives of the award and the relationship with the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) programme, of which it forms part. The programme structure and learning outcomes are detailed at Levels 4, 5 and 6, and the final assessment of the apprenticeship is also described. All module guides make use of a single template to ensure consistency. In considering the module guides the review team established that all modules match the descriptor for a qualification at Level 6 on the FHEQ. Because of this, and because the programme operates under the approval regime of the OU, the team concluded that sector-recognised standards for the programme are consistent with the national qualifications' framework.

23 The review team examined all the external examiner's reports since the start of delivery of the programme in 2017-18. These reports are written for the OU, although UCQ also receive a copy. All reports confirmed that sector-recognised standards were being consistently applied. The external examiner also noted that the standards attained are comparable to other institutions and that assessment at UCQ is generally appropriate and rigorous. Although the external examiner's first report in February 2018 drew attention to some over-generous marking, this issue did not feature in subsequent reports and the team drew the conclusion that it had been resolved to the external examiner's satisfaction. The team concluded that the external examiner has confirmed that sector-recognised standards are consistent with the national qualifications' framework.

24 The review team examined a representative sample of 36 pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules that have been delivered by the Centre so far, and across different academic levels. The sample included high, average and low grades for each module. While noting that no assessments at Level 6 have yet been carried out because no Level 6 modules have yet been delivered, the team found that UCQ assesses student work in line with the standards and learning outcomes expressed in the programme specification and module guides, and that assessed work reflects the relevant sector recognised standards.

25 The review team met teaching staff involved in assessment to test that they understand and apply the provider's approach to maintaining sector recognised standards. Staff cited regular programme meetings and standardisation exercises for their marking in line with the General Regulations to ensure that grading was as consistent as possible. They also explained that their approach included the provision of detailed feedback to students, matched to the learning outcomes, in order that students can understand the basis for the grade that was awarded to their work. Staff also referred in detail to the moderation and second-marking process used at UCQ and noted that small group sizes make this process feasible. They noted that there was generally close agreement between members of staff in decisions relating to feedback and grading. Overall, the review team considers that staff involved with assessment understand the process and are committed to the UCQ's approach to maintaining standards.

Conclusions

26 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.

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

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

29 This is because UCQ's regulation and deliberative structure embody a robust and credible approach to ensuring standards, and because standards set for its programme are consistent with sector-recognised standards. UCQ's external examiner has confirmed that sector-recognised standards are consistent with the national qualifications' framework; assessed student work reflects the relevant sector-recognised standards with the limitation that no Level 6 work has yet been assessed; and staff involved with assessment understood the process and were committed to the UCQ's approach to maintaining standards.

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

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

33 The 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 General Regulations - V3
- b Quality Policy for Learning - V1
- c Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy - V3
- d Monitoring and Evaluation Guiding Principles
- e Annual Institutional Overview from 2017-18
- f Annual Programme review
- g Template used for Annual Programme Data
- h Minutes of the Academic Council
- i Quality Policy for Learning
- j Self-Assessment Report
- k Quality Improvement Plan
- l BA (Hons) Professional Management - Programme Specification
- m Module 1.1 - Academic Skills Module Guide - V3
- n Module 1.2 - Leading People - Module Guide - V4
- o Module 1.3 - Communication - Module Guide - V3
- p Module 1.4 - Sales - Marketing - Module Guide - V4
- q Module 1.5 - Decision Making - Module Guide - V3
- r Module 1.6 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V4
- s Module 2.1 - Managing People - Module Guide - V3
- t Module 2.2 - Business Finance - Module Guide - V4
- u Module 2.3 - New Technologies - Module Guide - V4
- v Module 2.4 - Digital Business - Module Guide - V4
- w Module 2.5 - Developing Collaborative Relationships - Module Guide - V3
- x Module 2.6 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V5
- y Module 3.1 - Strategy - Change - Module Guide - V3
- z Module 3.2 - Project Management - Module Guide - V3
- aa Module 3.3 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V3
- bb Module 3.4 - Management Project - Module Guide - V3

- cc UCQ Examination Board 24-7-19 - External Examiner's Report
- dd UCQ Examination Board 24-5-19 - External Examiner's Report
- ee UCQ Examination Board 13-7-18 - External Examiner's Report
- ff UCQ Examination Board 22-2-18 - External Examiner's Report
- gg 17-18 - UCQ - BAHonsPM - Annual Prog Data Template 2017-18
- hh Meetings with students
- ii Meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

34 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:

35 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

36 Approved course documentation: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the documentation for this programme, specifically the programme specification, module guides and the student handbook

37 External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ .

38 Assessed student work: the review team examined a representative sample of 36 pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules that have been delivered by the Centre so far. This included high, average and low grades for each module.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

39 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.

40 The review team scrutinised UCQ's General Regulations and its Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy to identify the institutional approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification as the underlying basis for the standards of awards.

41 The review team examined the Monitoring and Evaluation Guiding Principles, an example of the Annual Institutional Overview from 2017-18 and the Annual Programme review from the same year, the template used for Annual Programme Data, minutes of the Academic Council, the Quality Policy for Learning, the Self-Assessment Report, and the Quality Improvement Plan to interrogate the robustness of the provider's plans for maintaining comparable standards and to ensure that plans are credible and evidence-based.

42 The team examined the programme specification and module guides to test that specified standards beyond the threshold for the course are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

43 The team had access to all the reports from the external examiner for the

programme since its inception to confirm that standards beyond the threshold for courses sampled are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met.

44 Assessed student work from different levels of the programme was reviewed to test that marks given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

45 The team met students to assess whether they understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold.

46 The team met academic staff to test that they understand and apply UCQ's approach to maintaining comparable standards.

What the evidence shows

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

48 The General Regulations are modelled on a template provided for validated awards of the Open University (OU). As such, they are comparable with the frameworks used by the OU's other partner institutions offering its validated awards. The regulations provide the overarching framework for delivery of the programme and provide a clear, detailed and structured approach to marking and moderation of assessed work and to determining classifications of awards beyond the threshold standards. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy expands on the General Regulations, and refers, for example, to the use of individual learning plans (ILPs) to agree specific and challenging targets with students. It also commits to teaching by qualified and experienced staff who set and achieve high standards and to the use of evidence-based practice to enhance successful outcomes for students; it refers also to raising student achievement and creating an environment that encourages questioning, nurtures independent thinking and, where appropriate, develops higher-order thinking skills. The review team concludes that UCQ has a clear and comprehensive approach to course and assessment design, to marking, moderation and the classification of awards, and to the requirements for the award offered by UCQ on behalf of the OU as the underlying basis for the standard of the award.

49 The framework for UCQ's approach to maintaining standards is the annual monitoring exercise, involving an annual report to the OU. UCQ's flow chart for annual monitoring provides a clear framework for the implementation of its process, and the Monitoring and Evaluation Guiding Principles set out clear guidance for the purpose of monitoring. The review team scrutinised documentation relating to the annual monitoring exercise in respect of 2017-18 including the institutional self-evaluation and the report relating to the experience of delivering the programme. The team also viewed data on student achievement and progression, prepared using the OU's template. The institutional and programme documents each include a report on how UCQ addressed any conditions of ongoing approval set by the OU in the previous year, as well as a forward-looking action plan arising from evidence in the self-evaluation. This process provides a framework for provision at UCQ to be improved over time using an evidence-based approach to identify issues and demonstrate that they have been addressed to the satisfaction of the various stakeholders involved. To exemplify the process, the team considered how issues raised through annual monitoring are used to inform institutional action plans. According to the Quality Policy for Learning, UCQ's plans for the Continuous Improvement of Provision centre on agreed areas for improvement being taken from the Self-Assessment Report and translated into a Quality Improvement Plan. An example of this was an action, taken from the institutional self-evaluation, to improve student engagement with the virtual learning environment (VLE) by monitoring the number of active users on the VLE as well as feedback

from student surveys: this action was subsequently adopted in UCQ's Quality Improvement Plan. The review team considered that this framework is credible because it is based on clearly-expressed institutional policies and is supported by detailed guidance on its implementation, and it is evidence-based because it makes use of data relating to student progression and achievement, because it informs institutional action plans, and because it is designed to ensure reporting on the completion of action plans. However, the team was unable to form a view about the robustness of the annual monitoring framework because there was not yet evidence of its operation for a complete cycle.

50 Approved course documentation in the form of the programme specification and module guides describes how assessments are to be graded, including information about how students may achieve higher grades based on the level of achievement of learning outcomes for each assessment component. These descriptions are tailored for each module and include specific criteria for each grade, as well as written advice for students about each assessment. UCQ also makes use of work-based assessments which are graded only on a pass or fail basis, but their specification includes clear descriptions of the criteria that students were required to show in order to achieve the required standard. The team found that UCQ's approach is comparable with other UK providers as it is based on standards of achievement relating to the completion of learning outcomes at the level of each component of assessment.

51 The external examiner for the programme had attended four exam boards by the time of the review visit, and the team examined all the related reports. These are completed to a format specified by the OU in which the examiner is asked to comment on whether the standards set are appropriate by reference to any agreed qualifications framework, programme specification or other relevant information. In each report, the external examiner confirmed that this was the case and that the quality of students' work, in relation to their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere was of the standard expected. Although no students have yet completed the programme and hence no awards have yet been made, the external examiner confirmed that credits had been awarded only when the appropriate standards had been met.

52 The review team considered a sample of assessed student work drawn from modules at Levels 4 and 5. Its review of this sample showed that in all cases the grades awarded were fair and were consistent with required standards. While noting that no assessments at Level 6 have yet been carried out because no Level 6 modules have yet been delivered, the team was satisfied that standards of student work at Levels 4 and 5 are reasonably comparable to those in other UK providers.

53 Students whom the team met freely expressed awareness of what they need to do in order to receive credit for their assessed work. They confirmed that UCQ encourages them to take opportunities to achieve standards beyond the threshold level, referring specifically to information contained in module guides about expectations in relation to assessment, and expressed familiarity with the marking criteria and associated approaches to assessment relating to the attainment of higher grades. The team formed the view that students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold.

54 The meeting with teaching staff demonstrated how staff involved in assessment understand UCQ's approach to the maintenance of standards. Staff described their involvement in the assessment process, including participation in marking, grading and moderation meetings, and carrying out standardisation exercises involving two members of staff independently marking the same pieces of student work. The review team concludes that teaching staff understand and apply the UCQ's approach to maintaining comparable standards.

Conclusions

55 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.

56 The review team, based on the evidence presented, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on UCQ's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The review team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in UCQ's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately.

57 Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and this Core practice is met.

58 This is because UCQ has a clear and comprehensive approach to course and assessment design, to marking, moderation and the classification of awards, and to the requirements for the award offered by UCQ as the underlying basis for its standard. Its framework is credible because it is based on clearly-expressed institutional policies and is supported by detailed guidance on its implementation, and it is evidence-based because it makes use of data relating to student progression and achievement, because it informs institutional action plans, and because it is designed to ensure reporting on the completion of action plans. However, the team was unable to form a view about the robustness of the framework because there was not yet evidence of its operation for a complete cycle.

59 UCQ's approach is comparable with other UK providers as it is based on standards of achievement relating to the completion of learning outcomes at the level of each component of assessment. The external examiner confirmed that credits had been awarded only when the appropriate standards had been met, and the team found that standards of student work at Levels 4 and 5 are reasonably comparable to those in other UK providers. However, there is no evidence relating to standards at Level 6 because Level 6 modules have not yet been delivered. Students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold, and teaching staff understand and apply the UCQ's approach to maintaining comparable standards.

60 The review team determined, based on the evidence presented, that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the provider's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The team considers that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately and therefore this Core practice is met.

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

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

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

63 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

64 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 Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Standard
- b Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement
- c OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- d General Regulations of UCQ
- e BA (Hons) Professional Management programme specification
- f Institutional report for 2017-18
- g Programme report for 2017-18
- h Template for the programme-level data return
- i Letter from the OU relating to the completion of the annual monitoring process
- j OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- k Partnership agreements between UCQ and its students' employers
- l Commitment statements signed by the student, the employer and UCQ
- m External examiner reports
- n Examples of students' assessed work
- o Meeting with senior staff
- p Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- q Meeting with Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager at the OU.

65 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:

66 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

67 Assessed student work: the review team examined a representative sample of 36 pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules that have been delivered by the Centre

so far. This included high, average and low grades for each module.

68 External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

69 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.

70 The team considered the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Standard, the Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement, OU's Handbook for Validated Awards and the General Regulations of UCQ to identify how UCQ ensures the standards of awards are credible and secure.

71 The review team scrutinised the programme specification for the BA (Hons) Professional Management programme, the institutional report for 2017-18, the programme report for the same period, the template for the programme-level statistical return from UCQ, a letter from the OU relating to the completion of the annual monitoring process, and the General Regulations of UCQ, in order to assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for securing standards in partnership.

72 The team scrutinised UCQ's General Regulations, the OU Handbook for Validated Awards, partnership agreements between UCQ and its students' employers, and commitment statements signed by the student, the employer and UCQ to interrogate the basis for the maintenance of academic standards within specific partnerships and that those arrangements are in line with the provider's regulations or policies.

73 External examiner reports were consulted to test whether the external examiner considers that standards are credible and secure.

74 The team examined a sample of 36 pieces of students' assessed work from the 12 modules to test that standards of awards are credible and secure and to confirm the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements.

75 The team spoke with a Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager at the OU and considered the Annual Monitoring Pro-Forma to test the awarding body's understanding of its responsibilities and how this is implemented and monitored in practice. The team also met senior staff and academic and professional support staff to test that they understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body.

What the evidence shows

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

77 UCQ's programme is delivered under the terms of the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards. To allow it to fulfil its responsibilities to the OU, UCQ has established its General Regulations which closely follow a template provided by the OU, and which describe in detail the OU's requirements for the framework of a validated programme in respect of institutional approval, review and validation processes. Institutional approval and review are the

processes through which an institution is judged to be a satisfactory environment for the presentation of programmes leading to OU-validated awards and for confirming that it continues to meet the OU's requirements.

78 In addition, UCQ works in partnership with the employers of students on the programme in order to enable it to operate the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) under the arrangements described in the CMDA Standard. Although employers are not responsible for delivery of any part of the programme, the Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement details the responsibilities of UCQ and of each employer in respect of the delivery of the Degree Apprenticeship.

79 UCQ ensures standards in its partnership with the OU through the periodic revalidation of its programme, due to take place next in 2021, and through the annual monitoring of its provision carried out in accordance with the OU's requirements. The review team noted evidence of annual monitoring in the form of the institutional report for 2017-18, the programme report for the same period, and the template for the programme-level statistical return from UCQ. These documents include a report, a forward-looking action plan and an update on how the issues from the previous action plan have been addressed. The OU subsequently confirmed in July 2019 that UCQ had satisfactorily completed its annual monitoring for 2017-18. In respect of its partnerships with employers, UCQ's General Regulations define the criteria for admission to the programme and attendance that students and employers must meet in order to be permitted to participate in the programme. These arrangements for securing standards in partnership are robust and credible because they are founded on the requirements of the validating body and of the CMDA and are reflected in UCQ's General Regulations; they are evidence-based because the annual monitoring process is based on regular evaluative review of UCQ's provision.

80 The review team examined the Approval and Validation Agreement for partners of the OU, which is published within its Handbook for Validated Awards. This document specifies criteria and processes, specifically for annual reporting, programme validation and institutional review, required for the maintenance of academic standards; UCQ's General Regulations are aligned with these criteria and processes. Employers of students who are undertaking the Degree Apprenticeship are subject to a Services Agreement relating to Apprenticeship Training. The team considered the template for this agreement as well as copies of five signed agreements with employers and three commitment statements signed by the student, the employer and UCQ. The review team found that the template was also in line with UCQ's General Regulations because it confirms that UCQ is responsible for delivery of the programme and maintenance of standards. The team concludes that there is a secure basis for the maintenance of standards with partnership agreements and that these are aligned with the General Regulations.

81 The external examiner's reports are prepared for the OU with UCQ receiving a copy. The external examiner noted that the standards attained over the last two years are comparable to those attained in other institutions and that assessment at UCQ is rigorous and at a suitable level. The team concludes that the external examiner's reports confirm that UCQ's underpinning arrangements for maintaining standards are effective.

82 The review team examined a representative sample of 36 pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules that have been delivered by UCQ so far, and across Levels 4 and 5. The sample included high, average and low grades for each module. While noting that no assessments at Level 6 have yet been carried out because no Level 6 modules have yet been delivered, the team found that UCQ assesses student work in line with the standards and learning outcomes expressed in the programme specification and module guides, and that assessed work reflects the relevant sector recognised standards. The team concluded that this provides further evidence that the standards of the award are

credible and secure.

83 A telephone meeting between the team and a Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager (SQPM) at the OU confirmed that UCQ has been an approved partner with the OU since December 2016 and that the OU considers that the partnership is working well. The meeting also confirmed that the period of institutional approval is for five years until 2021, at which point a further review will be scheduled. The SQPM showed understanding of the OU's responsibilities towards the operation of the partnership in describing the annual monitoring process through the Annual Monitoring Pro-Forma by means of which the OU provides formal feedback to UCQ. The team concluded that the OU has a clear understanding of its responsibilities and of how they are implemented in practice.

84 Academic staff whom the team met expressed confidence that they understand their responsibility for maintaining the standard of the programme, describing their participation in the process of moderation, of marking and in standardisation exercises on each other's marking, and affirming that the resources available at each centre are sufficient for delivery of modules.

Conclusions

85 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.

86 UCQ has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where, or how, courses are delivered or who delivers them. This is because it has a clear and comprehensive General Regulations document that details the management of the partnership with its validating university and other organisations and ensures that the standards of awards are credible and secure. Its plans to secure standards in provision delivered in partnership are robust and credible because they are founded on the requirements of the validating body and of the CMDA, and are reflected in UCQ's General Regulations; they are evidence-based because the annual monitoring process is based on regular evaluative review of UCQ's provision. The partnership agreements are clear, comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect UCQ's General Regulations for the management of partnerships. The external examiner for the programme confirms that the standards of awards delivered in partnership are credible and secure and staff at UCQ understand their respective responsibilities for academic standards. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

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

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

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

89 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

90 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 General Regulations
- b UCQ Grading, Marking and Moderation Procedure
- c Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Standard
- d Student Handbook
- e OU Handbook for Validated Awards 2018-19
- f BA (Hons) Professional Management - Programme Specification
- g UCQ Examination Board 24-7-19 - External Examiner's Report
- h UCQ - Formal Response to External Examiner Report - 02-08-19
- i UCQ Examination Board 24-5-19 - External Examiner's Report
- j UCQ - Formal Response to External Examiner Report - 31-05-19
- k UCQ Examination Board 13-7-18 - External Examiner's Report
- l UCQ - Formal Response to External Examiner Report - 20-07-18
- m UCQ Examination Board 22-2-18 - External Examiner's Report
- n UCQ - Formal Response to External Examiner Report - 22-02-18
- o Membership of the Board of Examiners
- p Academic Council Meeting minutes - 06-09-18
- q Academic Council Meeting minutes - 20-03-19
- r Academic Council Meeting minutes - 30-07-19
- s OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- t Meetings with students
- u Meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

91 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:

92 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

93 Records of course approval as UCQ is not responsible for course development.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

94 Approved course documentation: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the documentation for this programme, specifically the programme specification, module guides and the student handbook.

95 External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

96 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.

97 The review team examined the General Regulations and the Grading, Marking and Moderation Procedure to identify how external experts are used in maintaining academic standards, and how the provider's assessment and classification processes operate.

98 The programme specification, the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Standard, the Student Handbook and the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards 2018-19 were inspected by the team to assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the courses sampled.

99 The team scrutinised the membership of the Board of Examiners, minutes from UCQ's Academic Council, the external examiner's reports and UCQ's responses to the external examiner reports, to assess whether plans for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards and plans for assessment and classification processes are credible, robust and evidence-based.

100 The review team considered the external examiner's reports and UCQ's responses to them in order to verify that UCQ appropriately considers and responds to reports regarding standards and to identify the external examiner's views about the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes.

101 The team met academic staff to test that they understand the requirements for the use of external expertise, and the provider's assessment and classification processes. The team also met with students to understand how students regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes.

What the evidence shows

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

103 The review team examined the General Regulations, which set out the authority of the Board of Examiners to determine the progression of students and to recommend the progression or the conferment of awards. It also confirms that the OU appoints external examiners to UCQ and that external examiners are required to be members of any board that makes progression or award decisions, including classifications.

104 The team examined the UCQ Grading, Marking and Moderation Procedure and

found that it sets out clear procedures for internal and external marking and standardisation. The document clearly describes the sampling required for effective external moderation and the documentation to be provided to external examiners so that they can perform their role effectively. The team could also see that the role of the external examiner and Board of Examiners in confirming standards are embedded in UCQ's marking and grading procedures. Procedures for marking, moderation and standardisation are credible because they are based on a detailed step-by-step description of the process; they are robust because student work is scrutinised by several people, specifically three internal markers and, for work which contributes to an award, an external examiner; it is evidence-based because decisions are informed by specific and detailed grading descriptors.

105 Within the programme specification the review team noted that the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Standard is used as a point of reference to inform programme outcomes. It noted that this approach is in line with the stated principles related to programme management and monitoring detailed in the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards 2018-19. The programme specification and the Student Handbook set out assessment and classification processes which are reliable because they are consistent with the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards 2018-19; are fair because they are based on clear principles for assessment and progression; and are transparent because they set out clear and definitive requirements governing the amount of assessed work and the submission and grading of assessed work.

106 The composition of the Board of Examiners includes a subject specialist from the OU and the external examiner for the programme who is independent of the OU as the awarding body. Minutes of UCQ's Academic Council include evidence of discussion of programme monitoring and review, of the external examiner's comments and of actions in response to these comments. The external examiner's reports confirm that module guides give clear guidance to students about what is expected in assessed work, that assessment tasks are clearly specified and are based on stated learning outcomes and that marking is carried out fairly. Responses to the external examiner's reports set out actions and updates in response to the external examiner's comments and recommendations. These documents demonstrate an approach that uses external expertise consistently to ensure that assessment is credible and secure and confirms that the underpinning arrangements remain effective. UCQ reflects upon this process in the annual monitoring process, which results in UCQ implementing change, where appropriate. An example of this was feedback from the external examiner that blind second marking should be introduced. UCQ acknowledged this in a letter to the external examiner, and the team noted a resulting action within the minutes of the Academic Council. The team concluded that UCQ has a credible, robust and evidence-based approach to using external expertise in maintaining academic standards, and that it appropriately considers and responds to external reports regarding standards.

107 The academic staff who met the team demonstrated that they understand the requirements for the use of external expertise, and the UCQ assessment and classification processes, confirming that they use the grading criteria in assessing students' work and that they are aware of the external examiner's comments and engage in discussion with the external examiner about those comments. The team concluded that academic staff understand and use the external expertise and UCQ's assessment and classification processes.

108 Students who met the review team confirmed that they regard assessment and classification processes to be fair and transparent, and raised no concerns regarding these processes.

Conclusions

109 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.

110 UCQ uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. This is because it has clear and comprehensive regulations for assessment and classification and has a credible, robust and evidence-based approach to using external expertise in maintaining academic standards. Procedures for marking, moderation and standardisation are credible, robust and evidence-based. Approved course documentation sets out assessment and classification processes which are reliable, fair and transparent. UCQ has a credible, robust and evidence-based approach to using external expertise in maintaining academic standards. Academic staff understand and use the external expertise and UCQ's assessment and classification processes, and students regard assessment and classification processes as fair and transparent. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

111 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix with the exception of third-party endorsements and records of course approval, therefore the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

113 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

114 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 General Regulations
- b Admissions Policy
- c Initial Assessment for Apprenticeships Process
- d Quality Improvement Plan
- e 17-18 - UCQ - BAHonsPM - Annual Prog Data Template 2017-18
- f Programme specification
- g Meeting with students
- h Meeting with academic staff.

115 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:

116 Arrangements with recruitment agents because UCQ reported that they do not use recruitment agents.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

117 Admissions records: a random sample of 48 admission records were examined by the review team.

118 Approved course documentation: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the programme specification for this programme.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

119 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.

120 The review team examined the General Regulations, the Admissions Policy and the Initial Assessment for Apprenticeships Process to identify institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students, roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the admissions process, support for applicants, how the provider verifies applicants' entry qualifications and how the provider facilitates an inclusive admissions system.

121 The Quality Improvement Plan and Annual Programme Data were inspected in order to assess whether the provider has plans for ensuring that its admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive.

122 The team examined the website during the review visit to test whether the information given to applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose.

123 The team examined the programme specification and the Admissions Policy to test whether admissions requirements for courses sampled reflect UCQ's overall regulations and/or policy.

124 Admissions records were inspected to assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions are made at UCQ.

125 The team also met students and academic and professional support staff to test whether staff understand their responsibilities, are appropriately skilled and supported and to assess students' views about the admissions process.

What the evidence shows

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

127 The review team scrutinised UCQ's Admissions Policy to understand institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students. The policy does not set minimum academic requirements but instead enables UCQ to take account of applicants' prior experience and learning. The Initial Assessment for Apprenticeships Process describes the assessment of applicants, conducted by a designated tutor, that involves a detailed discussion with both the applicant and employer's representative. This meeting, intended to enable a thorough discussion of all relevant issues in order to make an effective and fair admissions decision within the format of a face-to-face meeting, includes the consideration of any potential barriers to learning, the aspirations of the applicant, screening for learning difficulties and an assessment of prior learning and leads to the preparation of an ILP for the applicant. The General Regulations describe applicants' right to appeal against an admissions decision and are available on UCQ's website. The team concluded that UCQ's policies and practices combine to form a fair and reliable approach to the admission of students.

128 The Quality Improvement Plan and Annual Programme Data show that UCQ has used internally generated data to identify required actions relating to the promotion of the programme to under-represented groups in other areas of its provision. There is also a specific reference to the degree apprenticeship in terms of improving the provision of information and guidance to help improve retention. The Annual Programme Data within UCQ's annual monitoring report to the OU also includes evidence of an assessment of its approach to admissions in terms of inclusivity and fairness. The team concluded that UCQ's approach facilitates an inclusive admissions process that also enables the provision of information for applicants as they proceed through the admissions process.

129 UCQ provides information on its website for both students and employers about the CMDA, the Apprenticeship Levy that funds the course, and other information. The use of student case studies and a Frequently Asked Questions section are helpful and informative features. As the provider offers only a single programme, there was little distinction between generic (non subject-specific) information and specific course information. Although the website contains insufficient information about the necessary level of commitment on the part of students for success on the programme, it does provide information about fees, locations, term dates, additional costs and generic information about the provider, its policies and institutional resources, as well as information about support for parents and about mental health. The team concluded that information provided for applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose.

130 The programme specification includes statements about admissions processes that are aligned with the Admissions Policy in respect of the acceptability of previous learning experiences for admission to the programme. The team formed the view that admissions requirements reflect the Admissions Policy.

131 The team found that the admissions records are detailed, complete and reflect UCQ's policies and procedures. Records include application forms, approval forms, the various assessments of English, mathematics, dyslexia screening, the ILP that resulted from the meeting with the applicant and the letter of acceptance. The team determined that reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled.

132 Students who met the team confirmed that they consider the admissions process to be fair and inclusive, expressing positive views in particular about the information provided at the pre-enrolment Assessment Day and about helpful information from staff verbally regarding the necessary commitment to, and expectations of, the programme.

133 Employers are briefed about the course in advance and discuss with UCQ who would be likely to benefit from it. Representatives of employers confirmed that they nominate students for admission to the programme and expressed positive views about the admissions process particularly in respect of its robustness in assessing the eligibility and suitability of applicants and about the helpfulness of UCQ staff in providing information to applicants.

134 Teaching and professional support staff expressed their understanding of their roles in admissions and their commitment to participating and supporting students at the Assessment Day. They identified this day as a significant opportunity for them to support the formulation of ILPs as well as discussing with students the commitment required of them in order to be successful.

Conclusions

135 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.

136 UCQ has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because it has clear policies for the recruitment and admission of students which are reliable, fair and inclusive. Its plans for ensuring that its systems are reliable, fair and inclusive are robust and credible and students tend to agree with this assessment. Admissions records demonstrate that the provider's policies are implemented in practice. Teaching and professional support staff involved in admissions understand their role and employers that work with UCQ confirm

that the process is fair and reliable. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

137 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix with the exception of arrangements with recruitment agents, therefore the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

139 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

140 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 General Regulations
- b Monitoring and Evaluation Guiding Principles - V1
- c Annual Monitoring Flow Chart
- d Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- e Student Handbook
- f BA (Hons) Professional Management - Programme Specification
- g Module 1.1 - Academic Skills Module Guide - V3
- h Module 1.2 - Leading People - Module Guide - V4
- i Module 1.3 - Communication - Module Guide - V3
- j Module 1.4 - Sales - Marketing - Module Guide - V4
- k Module 1.5 - Decision Making - Module Guide - V3
- l Module 1.6 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V4
- m Module 2.1 - Managing People - Module Guide - V3
- n Module 2.2 - Business Finance - Module Guide - V4
- o Module 2.3 - New Technologies - Module Guide - V4
- p Module 2.4 - Digital Business - Module Guide - V4
- q Module 2.5 - Developing Collaborative Relationships - Module Guide - V3
- r Module 2.6 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V5
- s Module 3.1 - Strategy - Change - Module Guide - V3
- t Module 3.2 - Project Management - Module Guide - V3
- u Module 3.3 - Professional Practice - Module Guide - V3
- v Module 3.4 - Management Project - Module Guide - V3
- w UCQ Examination Board 24-7-19 - External Examiner's Report
- x UCQ Examination Board 24-5-19 - External Examiner's Report
- y UCQ Examination Board 13-7-18 - External Examiner's Report
- z UCQ Examination Board 22-2-18 - External Examiner's Report
- aa Policy/regulation/process mapping document
- bb Annual 17-18 - UCQ - SQPM Proforma 2017-18
- cc Collation of student survey results
- dd Student submission
- ee Meetings with students
- ff Meetings with employers
- gg Meeting with academic and professional support staff

- hh Lesson observation - taught session
- ii Lesson observation - PDA support session.

141 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:

142 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

143 Approved course documentation: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the documentation for this programme, specifically the programme specification, module guides and the student handbook.

144 External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ.

145 Observation of teaching and learning: the review team observed two sessions, chosen to be representative of UCQ's provision, specifically a lecture at the Newcastle Centre attended by four students and a webinar session in which a single student participated from their workplace.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

146 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.

147 The review team examined the General Regulations, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, the Monitoring and Evaluation Guiding Principles and the Annual Monitoring Flow Chart to identify the provider's approach to delivering high-quality courses.

148 The team scrutinised UCQ's annual reporting to the OU, including the policy/regulation/process mapping document and the annual programme monitoring report to assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for designing high-quality courses.

149 The review team scrutinised the programme specification, module guides, and student handbook to test that all elements of UCQ's course is 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.

150 The team read all reports from the external examiner to identify the external examiner's views about the quality of the course offered by UCQ.

151 The team reviewed the student submission and outcomes from the internal student survey to identify students' views about the quality of their course.

152 The team met with students to assess their views about the quality of the course

and met academic and professional support staff to assess how they ensure courses are high quality.

153 The review team had four meetings with employers of students on the programme to identify their views about the quality of the course.

154 The team observed two teaching and learning sessions in order to test whether course delivery is of high quality.

What the evidence shows

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

156 The regulations relating to the provision of awards are those of the OU for its validated awards and are supported by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and the Annual Monitoring Principles and flow chart. Taken together, these documents set out a framework which covers a wide range of factors relating to the design and delivery of high-quality courses including award and credit frameworks, assessment and progression, teaching and learning and arrangements for monitoring and review.

157 The review team found evidence of UCQ's plans for designing high-quality courses within its reporting to the OU. The policy/regulation/process mapping document shows how UCQ's design, development and approval process worked for the single programme that it currently offers. This included an internal validation process, as well as prior consultations with employers and potential students. This was overseen by the Curriculum Review Board before undergoing a validation event with the OU. The annual monitoring report for the programme provided evidence to the team of the ongoing communication between UCQ and the OU to ensure that programme documentation remains up-to-date and in-line with the expectations of the OU for the quality of design and delivery of programmes. The team agreed that, with the oversight of this process and the associated action plans exercised by the Academic Council, UCQ has in place an effective process to ensure that any future programme design and delivery will be of similarly high quality.

158 Programme documentation, including module guides and the student handbook, is clear, comprehensive and well-written. When considered with the programme specification, which is based on another template provided by the OU, the team concluded that the documentation demonstrates how programme and module learning outcomes are to be achieved by students. Module guides follow a standard template where consistency of content is likely to be beneficial to students as they progress through their studies: for instance, all include, under the heading 'Assessment guidance', a matrix which specifies how each assessment addresses the achievement of discrete learning outcomes.

159 The external examiner's reports repeatedly note that the module guides are of high quality and that assessment tasks give clear guidance about what is expected and indicate that teaching is of a high quality. The team concluded that the external examiner has positive views about the quality of the programme.

160 The student submission affirms the positive views of students about the programme, particularly concerning the high quality of teaching and the development of management skills, which students regard as likely to benefit their future careers. Outcomes of the internal student survey indicate that students have positive views about the quality of teaching and the level of intellectual stimulation on the programme. This is apparent in the most recent survey, carried out in 2018, to which 93% of an unknown number of students responded, to which a clear majority of responses indicated agreement with the following survey items: 'Staff are good at explaining things' (71%), 'Staff have made the subject interesting' (71%), and 'The course is intellectually stimulating' (71%).

161 Students who met the team expressed positive views about the quality of the programme, drawing attention to its relevance to their employment and the clear expectations set out in assessment tasks.

162 In meetings with teaching staff, the review team explored how those delivering the programme could demonstrate their understanding of what is meant by 'high quality'. Evidence for this was apparent through the ways in which staff expressed tangible, positive approaches to teaching and learning in the classroom and in the assessment set. The team also noted that staff were keen to be working collegiately in order to deliver a high-quality student experience.

163 Employers whom the team met expressed the view that the programme is of high quality and very relevant to their businesses, drawing attention, for instance, to their view that participation in the programme was empowering students by allowing them to take more advanced roles within the business, and to the view that learning is relevant and purposeful. The team concluded that employers have positive views about the quality of the programme.

164 The review team noted that the lecture which was observed was well planned and structured, drawing on a suitable set of resources and making effective use of the lecturer's own research experience. Its presentation was clear, and there was active student involvement in the associated discussion. The webinar session was a one-to-one professional development session, which successfully engaged the student in a discussion about how to apply theory to management practice, leading to further discussion of the student's ILP. The team noted that, although different, both sessions had clear objectives, were well planned and organised, were well delivered with appropriate content, showed effective use of resources and genuine engagement from the students involved. Based on this sample, the team concludes that course delivery is of high quality.

Conclusions

165 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.

166 UCQ designs and delivers high-quality courses. This is because it has regulations from the OU, and institutional policies for course design that facilitate high-quality course delivery. Approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Meetings with students confirmed to the review team that students regard their courses as being of high quality. Staff and employers who met the team supported this assessment: the staff, by being able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of the provider and the course; employers, by supporting students' views about the course and its role in empowering students in their working roles. External examiner reports and the team's own observations of teaching and learning further support the team's judgement that the provider delivers a high-quality course. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

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

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

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

169 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

170 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 OU's Handbook for Validated Awards
- b UCQ's Strategic Plan
- c Key performance indicators
- d Staff Handbook
- e Staff Development and Performance
- f Monitoring completion letter from the OU
- g Observations of Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Progress
- h 17-18 - Org Chart - UCQ 2017-18
- i 17-18 - UCQ - Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship - Phillips - Mr Mike 18
- j 17-18 - UCQ - SQPM Proforma 2017-18
- k Collation of student survey results
- l CMDA Tutor Summary 2019
- m Staff CVs
- n Student submission
- o Meetings with students
- p Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- q Lesson observation - taught session
- r Lesson observation - PDA support session.

171 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:

172 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

173 Student views: no sampling was necessary as the Centre offers a single programme. The review team examined the student submission and the results of the internal Quayside Student Survey.

174 Job descriptions and details of postholders: the review team examined the job

descriptions and CVs of all nine members of higher education teaching staff.

175 Observation of teaching and learning: the review team observed two sessions, chosen to be representative of UCQ's provision, specifically a teaching session at the Newcastle Centre attended by four students and a webinar session conducted at Newcastle by the Professional Development Assessor in which one student participated.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

176 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.

177 The OU's Handbook for Validated Awards, UCQ's Strategic Plan and the linked key performance indicators, the Staff Handbook, and Staff Development and Performance were considered in order to determine how UCQ recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff.

178 Third party endorsements in the form of monitoring reports by the OU's academic reviewer and the monitoring completion letter from the OU, as well as the policy on Observations of Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Progress were considered in order to identify the awarding body's views on staffing at UCQ.

179 The organisational chart was reviewed in order to identify the roles or posts the provider has to deliver a high-quality learning experience and assess whether they are sufficient.

180 The views of students as gathered through the student submission, the outcomes of the UCQ internal student survey and in meetings were considered in order to identify their opinions on the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff.

181 CVs of staff holding specific posts were examined in order to assess whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, and whether staff are recruited according to UCQ's policies and procedures, and the summary of staff roles.

182 The meeting with staff was used to assess whether they are appropriately qualified and skilled to perform their roles effectively.

183 Observations of teaching and learning were carried out to test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience.

What the evidence shows

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

185 The review team found the provider's policy for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff in the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards, which sets out the principles and regulations for OU validated awards. This handbook forms part of the agreement between UCQ and the OU and also 'sets out the operational requirements expected of the Institution while an Approved Institution. This document articulates the requirement for UCQ to maintain an appropriately qualified and experienced staff team as a condition of ongoing institutional approval and to support them in their continuing professional development. This document defines the requirement for UCQ to appoint staff

who should be qualified to a higher level than the course offered; the review team agreed this was a practical approach to ensuring that appropriately qualified and skilled staff would be recruited, and noted also that the OU's handbook also allowed for the acceptability of staff with extensive relevant experience as an alternative to academic qualifications. This approach to supporting staff is credible because it is based on the policies and approaches of the OU.

186 Although UCQ's Strategic Plan and the linked key performance indicators do not include goals or targets specific to the provision of higher education, the Observations of Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Progress Policy, the Staff Handbook and the policy for Staff Development and Performance set out an approach to supporting staff with their professional development. This approach is robust and evidence-based because it includes clear criteria and goals for supporting staff and because it is linked to assessments of staff performance.

187 The OU's monitoring report on UCQ's provision for 2017-18 commends the establishment of a staff satisfaction survey, confirms that the OU has reviewed the CVs of all newly-appointed academic staff and has accepted that they have appropriate expertise for the delivery of the programme, and acknowledges that UCQ has provided detailed information about staff development of academic and senior staff. The report additionally advises UCQ to exercise caution in the implementation of its policy on Observations of Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Progress to ensure it is conducive to developing a higher education culture founded on the principles of peer review. Noting, however, that the OU has confirmed that all issues in annual monitoring have been satisfactorily addressed, the review team concluded that, overall, the OU has positive views about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of UCQ's staff.

188 The review team examined the organisational chart in order to establish a 'high-level' overview of the plans for staffing undertaken by the provider. In addition to academic staff, UCQ also employs work-based learning assessors and quality assurance staff as well as Student Services, Admissions, Curriculum, Data and Administration staff across the centre. The team formed the view that UCQ has sufficient and appropriate grades of staff, both academic and professional support, and a suitable organisational structure to deliver a high-quality experience to students.

189 The team scrutinised the job descriptions and CVs of all nine members of academic staff of whom six have postgraduate qualifications, and six have work experience in management roles. Members of academic and professional support staff whom the team met offered examples of how they had been supported in their roles by UCQ, citing staff development opportunities in the form of additional training in software, upskilling of academic knowledge, and support to apply for Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. The review team formed the view that academic staff are suitably qualified and experienced to perform their roles effectively in the delivery of UCQ's programme.

190 Students whom the team met drew attention to the range of knowledge, skills and experience of teaching staff and their awareness of workplace contexts supportive of the content of the programme, and affirmed that their tutors have relevant work experience and are able to draw on teaching materials which relate to students' organisations. The review team concluded that students consider staff to be sufficiently skilled and qualified to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

191 Outcomes of the internal student survey provide further evidence that students have positive views about the quality of teaching and the level of intellectual stimulation on the programme. This is apparent in the most recent iteration of the survey, carried out in 2018 and achieving a 93% response rate, in which 71% of students indicated agreement with the

following survey items: 'Staff are good at explaining things', and 'Staff have made the subject interesting'. The student submission also affirms high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and with the levels of support and guidance available from professional support staff.

192 Observations of teaching and learning seen by the review team had clear objectives, were well planned and organised, well delivered with appropriate content, and showed effective use of resources and that students were engaged. The team considers these two observations, including the role of the Professional Development Assessor, to be representative of the quality of teaching overall as they are full-time staff and teach across all centres. The review team concluded that academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience.

Conclusions

193 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.

194 UCQ has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because its approach to supporting staff is credible, robust and evidence-based. The OU, as the awarding body, has positive views about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of UCQ's staff, and students consider staff to be sufficiently skilled and qualified to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Academic staff are suitably qualified and experienced to perform their roles effectively and observations of teaching and learning show that academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

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

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

196 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.

197 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

198 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 OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- b Delivery Venue Vetting Form
- c UCQ - 17-18 - Annual Institutional Overview - 2017-18_TH 31-01-19
- d 17-18 - Org Chart - UCQ 2017-18
- e 17-18 - UCQ - BAHonsPM - APE 2017-18 - TH 31-01-19
- f Collation of Student Survey Results
- g Staff Student Liaison Committee - Meeting minutes 10-04-19
- h Staff Student Liaison Committee - Meeting minutes 09-11-18
- i UCQ VLE plans
- j UCQ student submission
- k Lesson observation 2 (PDA support session)
- l Tour of Resources
- m Meetings with students
- n Meetings with employers
- o Meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

199 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:

200 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

201 Student views: no sampling was necessary as the Centre offers a single programme. The review team examined the student submission and the results of the internal Quayside Student Survey.

202 Job descriptions: the review team examined the job descriptions of all nine members of higher education teaching staff.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

203 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.

204 The review team examined the OU Handbook for Validated Awards, UCQ's monitoring reports to the OU, the Delivery Venue Vetting Form and its VLE Plans to identify how the provider's facilities, learning resources and student support services contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience and to assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that they have sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services.

205 The team read the student submission, the minutes of the Staff Student Liaison Committee and UCQ's internal surveys to identify students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services.

206 The team examined the UCQ Organisational Chart and made its own assessment of the facilities, including an observation of some of these in use, to judge whether the facilities, resources or services under assessment deliver a high-quality academic experience.

207 The team met with students, their employers and staff to test whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled and understand their roles and responsibilities and to assess students' and their employers' views about facilities, learning resources and support services.

What the evidence shows

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

209 UCQ has no strategy or plan for maintaining facilities, learning resources and student support services, or any available process that details how it audits resources to decide as to their adequacy. While UCQ's submission refers to the course approval process as the way in which it ensures appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services, this approach places responsibility for auditing the adequacy of these resources with the OU rather than with UCQ itself. The OU's Handbook for Validated Awards confirms that the OU demands that UCQ must provide 'adequate learning resources and support services' as a condition of its institutional approval. However, there is no mention of the OU assuming responsibility for an ongoing audit of UCQ's physical resources, and it provides no strategy for UCQ to follow in this regard. In the institutional level annual monitoring report and the programme report, UCQ provides information to the OU about changes it has made to improve the physical resource base and teaching facilities. However, it is not required to provide a regular audit of the adequacy of its facilities. The team formed the view that without an institutional-level approach, it would not be possible for UCQ to assess its learning resources against the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for its students.

210 UCQ's delivery model is based on a geographically-distributed student body engaged in work-based learning for a variety of employers and makes use of six learning centres. UCQ carries out structured prior vetting of each location being considered as a learning centre, typically the premises of an employer supporting students on the

programme, based on its Delivery Venue Vetting Form. This approach enables UCQ to assess the venue for general health and safety requirements as well as for its suitability as a venue for teaching and learning, thereby allowing consistency in ensuring that each venue can facilitate a high-quality academic experience. Staff compile an action plan concerning any improvement that is required for the facilities to be used by them. UCQ has developed its support for online delivery around the use of Microsoft Office 365 and, although it acknowledges in its plans for its VLE that this platform is not yet being fully and effectively used by students, it has identified specific points for its further development, including its support for library facilities and for ePortfolio software. UCQ's approach is evidence-based because it is based on UCQ's direct observation and evaluation of resources and facilities and is credible because it allows for the identification and evaluation of different types of risk.

211 The review team identified students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services through reading the student submission as well as the minutes of the Staff Student Liaison Committee and UCQ's internal surveys. Outcomes of internal surveys indicated that levels of satisfaction with learning resources had decreased from the first year of operations to the second. In the 2017 survey, to which 53% of an unknown number of students responded, 79% of responses indicated agreement with the statement that 'The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well', 89% indicated agreement with the statement that 'The library resources (for example, books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well', and 89% indicated agreement with the statement that 'I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to'. In the 2018 survey, to which 93% of an unknown number of students responded, the corresponding figures were 43%, 43% and 50% respectively. The team formed the view that these figures indicate that students collectively have some concerns about the availability or effectiveness of learning resources or facilities. Despite this, minutes of the Staff Student Liaison Committee from November 2018 and April 2019 include no expressions of students' views about learning resources or facilities. The student submission affirms that all responses to the survey of students on which the submission is based agree that UCQ has enough good quality facilities, learning resources, and support services to deliver a high-quality learning experience, while suggesting also that improvements are needed to the VLE and access to library resources.

212 Students whom the team met confirmed that they consider that the resources are sufficient and appropriate to support their needs and provide them with a high-quality academic experience. Students highlighted the tools that allow UCQ to track and support their progress and to communicate with them. They also acknowledged the response of UCQ to resolve issues that they had raised, such as that of e-library resourcing. The review team concluded that students have generally positive views about facilities and learning resources.

213 UCQ's organisational chart allowed the review team to identify the provider's job roles, and structures and resources as well as student support services. This was complemented by their direct assessment of resources during the review visit. The team found that UCQ's arrangements for providing learning resources, student support services and facilities are credible and realistic, are demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students and support a high-quality academic experience. In considering how UCQ addresses the challenges posed by the wide geographic distribution of its students, the review team found that UCQ has an effective method of supporting students, regardless of their location, using videoconferencing software and they observed this being used effectively in a session conducted by the Professional Development Assessor. The team judged this to be a facility that would effectively allow student support services to enable the delivery of a high-quality academic experience.

214 Academic and professional support staff expressed understanding of their roles and responsibilities, drawing attention to their use of online tools to support students and to make learning resources available to them, and affirming that this facility was being further improved by UCQ. Employers whom the team met, in their role of supporting students employed by them, confirmed their belief that UCQ provides sufficient and appropriate facilities and learning resources to support student achievement and provide a high-quality academic experience.

Conclusions

215 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.

216 UCQ has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because the review team's assessment of facilities and learning resources confirms that UCQ is addressing the particular demands of the wide geographic distribution of its students to provide a high-quality academic experience. This view is supported by students who tend to regard facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate; nevertheless, outcomes of surveys of students' views indicate that students collectively have some concerns about the availability or effectiveness of learning resources or facilities. Employers consider that UCQ provides sufficient and appropriate facilities and learning resources to support student achievement and provide a high-quality academic experience. Academic and professional staff are aware of how to make effective use of learning resources in supporting students. Although UCQ places heavy reliance on the OU for assuring the sufficiency and appropriateness of its learning resources rather than on an independently-developed strategy, the team considered that its resources are sufficient. The review team concludes, therefore, that on balance this Core practice is met.

217 Because the review team was unable to establish UCQ's strategy or plans for its resourcing, linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for its students, it has a moderate degree of confidence in its judgement.

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

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

219 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

220 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 UCQ - 17-18 - Annual Institutional Overview - 2017-18_TH 31-01-19
- b 17-18 - UCQ Committee structure 2017-18
- c 17-18 - UCQ - BAHonsPM - APE 2017-18 - TH 31-01-19
- d 17-18 - 2018 Student Feedback and Results Report - TH 31-01-19
- e Collation of Student Survey Results
- f Academic Council Meeting minutes - 06-09-18
- g Academic Council Meeting minutes - 20-03-19
- h Academic Council Meeting minutes - 30-07-2019
- i Staff Student Liaison Committee - Meeting minutes 10-04-19
- j Staff Student Liaison Committee - Meeting minutes 09-11-18
- k Student submission
- l Student Handbook
- m Meeting with senior staff
- n Meetings with students.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

221 Student views: no sampling was necessary as UCQ offers a single programme. The review team examined the student submission and the results of the internal Quayside Student Survey.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

222 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.

223 The review team examined minutes from the Academic Council and the Staff

Student Liaison Committee and the UCQ Committee Structure to identify how the provider actively engages students in the quality of their educational experience and to assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

224 To find examples of the provider changing or improving provision as a result of student engagement, the team considered the student submission, minutes of the Academic Council, the Annual Institutional Overview and the programme monitoring report for 2017-18, as well as a meeting with students.

225 The team then examined UCQ's internal student surveys, the associated report for the latest survey and the student submission to identify students' views about student engagement in the quality of their educational experience.

226 The team also met students to assess whether students consider they are engaged in the quality of their educational experience.

What the evidence shows

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

228 Although UCQ does not have a specific policy in respect of student engagement, its approach is evidenced in minutes from the Academic Council and from the Staff Student Liaison Committee, which show that their membership includes student representation. Senior staff explained that student surveys are collected at induction, after each module and annually and that the feedback gathered is collected, collated and analysed and data feeds into the annual monitoring processes.

229 The collective student voice is expressed through membership of a student representative on the Academic Council. The student representative represents the views of fellow students to Academic Council. Minutes of the Council show evidence of engagement by student representatives for instance in their identification of the need to embed new software in teaching practice. Students are not, however, represented on other committees at provider level such as the Quality and Standards Committee or the Curriculum Review Board.

230 The Committee Structure shows that the Staff Student Liaison Committee reports to the Education and Training Committee (ETC) but the team could find no evidence that it did so during the 2018-19 academic year. Although minutes of the Academic Council show that it received verbal reports from the Staff Student Liaison Committee in its meetings in March and July 2019, these minutes do not evidence consideration of issues raised by the Staff Student Liaison Committee such as access to other universities' libraries and the promotion of student mentoring. However, the team took into account the UCQ's small size and that common membership between committees would aid communication between them. The team concluded that UCQ has a clear and effective approach to actively engage students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience.

231 The student submission affirms that most students consider that staff listen to their views about the programme and that their needs and suggestions are acted upon promptly. Outcomes of internal surveys indicated levels of satisfaction with the manner in which UCQ responds to the student voice. In the 2017 survey, to which 53% of an unknown number of students responded, 84% of responses indicated agreement with the statement that 'I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course', 89% indicated agreement with the statement that 'Staff value students' views and opinions about the course', and 63% indicated agreement with the statement that 'It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on', whereas in the 2018 survey, to which 93% of an unknown number of

students responded, the corresponding figures were 79%, 79% and 57% respectively. Responses to feedback questionnaires relating to individual modules show that in 2018 levels of overall satisfaction for the four Level 4 modules and the three Level 5 modules delivered that year range from 71% to 97%. The team concluded that individually students are actively engaged in the quality of their educational experience and that generally they have positive views about their engagement.

232 UCQ monitors and analyses results from its internal surveys as shown in its 2018 Student Feedback and Results report which includes an action plan based on survey outcomes. Responsibilities for oversight of each action are assigned to one of UCQ's committees, specifically to either the Academic Council or the Curriculum Review Board, but the plan includes no timescales for their completion. Minutes of the Academic Council show evidence of UCQ responding to student feedback concerning academic support, the timing of assessments and the listing of books in the library that are available for students.

233 Students whom the team met expressed the view that staff are responsive to students' views, mentioning for example the speedy provision of a whiteboard at the centre in Leeds. UCQ's Annual Institutional Overview shows that student views have informed the identification of several actions at provider level in respect of, for instance, the provision of IT facilities and library resources, and opportunities for collaborative learning. The team concluded that there are examples of UCQ changing and improving the students' learning experience as a result of student engagement.

234 Students were unequivocal in their opinion that they were happy with their engagement with UCQ. They highlighted the student representatives, the use of internal surveys and stated that UCQ resolved all the issues they raised to their satisfaction. Students commented that they felt confident to express their opinions to staff. However, they also knew that they could raise issues through their tutors or their student representative. Students informed the team that student representative elections were currently taking place to choose new ones. Students also highlighted that the UCQ Newsletter includes a response from UCQ to their feedback in a 'You said, we did' format to inform them of changes that had been made to the provision.

Conclusions

235 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.

236 UCQ actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because although there are no formal arrangements for student engagement this is mitigated by the small scale of the provision and UCQ's approach is clear and effective. There are examples of UCQ changing students' learning experience as a result of student engagement and students have generally positive views about their engagement in the quality of their educational experience. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

237 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix, therefore the review team has a moderate 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

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

239 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

240 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 General Regulations
- b Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement
- c Student Handbook
- d Complaints Procedure
- e Appeals Procedure
- f Academic Council Meeting minutes - 06-09-18
- g Academic Council Meeting minutes - 20-03-19
- h Academic Council Meeting minutes - 30-07-2019
- i UCQ website
- j Meetings with students.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

241 Examples of complaints and appeals: no sampling was carried out as UCQ reported that they had not received any complaints or appeals.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

242 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.

243 The review team examined UCQ's Complaints procedure, its Appeals procedure, and the General Regulations to identify the provider's processes for handling complaints and appeals.

244 The team inspected the UCQ's Complaints procedure, its Appeals procedure, the

Student Handbook, the Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement and minutes from the Academic Council Meetings to assess whether the provider 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.

245 The team considered the Student Handbook, the Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement and the UCQ website, as well as the meetings with students to assess whether information for potential and actual complainants and appellants is clear and accessible.

246 The review team met students to understand their views about the clarity and accessibility of the provider's complaints and appeals procedures.

What the evidence shows

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

248 UCQ has policies for handling complaints and appeals which are definitive, fair and transparent and deliver timely outcomes because they provide for appropriate support for students, maintaining confidentiality, the use of straightforward language and the management of expectations of parties involved, and are embedded in UCQ's General Regulations. The policy allows for a student who has exhausted UCQ's internal system to have recourse to the appeals or complaints procedures of the OU, with appropriate information provided about the services of the OIA in each document.

249 UCQ's approach to operating its procedures includes the provision of a dedicated email address for students to access these procedures and the identification of a member of the Academic Council to carry out investigations. The team noted that information about complaints in the Student Handbook contains the contact details for a named administrator to support students with the process. UCQ checks students' awareness of the appeals process through the Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Agreement, which requires students to confirm their understanding of this aspect of the provision. Academic Council minutes show that its agendas include a standing item to monitor complaints and appeals. The team concluded that UCQ's approach to operating its procedures is credible and robust because it has assigned individual responsibilities for their operation and because they are overseen by the Academic Council, but are not evidence-based because the procedures have not yet been used.

250 Procedures for complaints and appeals are set out in the Student Handbook, on its website and in the Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement, which also ensures that applicants to UCQ can easily access them. Students who met the review team were confident that, in the first instance, they could raise issues with their lecturer, and confirmed their awareness that information about procedures for complaints and appeals is accessible on UCQ's website. The team formed the view that information for students about procedures for complaints and appeals is clear and accessible to students.

251 UCQ has received no complaints or appeals from students or from applicants, and hence the review team was unable to test whether complaints and appeals were dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

Conclusions

252 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.

253 UCQ has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. This is because UCQ's policies are fair and transparent, and its approach to operating its procedures is credible and robust, although they are not evidence-based because the procedures have not yet been used. Students, who do not raise any serious concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures, agree that procedures are clear and accessible. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

254 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of examples of complaints and appeals, all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. The review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement. This is because although students have yet to raise formal complaints or make an appeal, UCQ has presented evidence of credible, robust and evidenced-based plans for operating fair and transparent procedures that will deliver timely outcomes.

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

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

256 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

257 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 General Regulations
- b OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- c Quality Policy for Learning
- d Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement
- e Student Handbook
- f Delivery Venue Vetting Form
- g Employer Progress Review form
- h UCQ Examination Board 24-7-19 - External Examiner's Report
- i UCQ Examination Board 24-5-19 - External Examiner's Report
- j UCQ Examination Board 13-7-18 - External Examiner's Report
- k UCQ Examination Board 22-2-18 - External Examiner's Report
- l Santander_Testimonial.V.1.20190328
- m Maersk_LAtkinson.V.1.20161006
- n CSG referral letter 04.10.19
- o Rentokil_UCQ_Letter.V.1.20191004
- p UCQ - 17-18 - Annual Institutional Overview - 2017-18_TH 31-01-19
- q 17-18 - UCQ - BAHonsPM - APE 2017-18 - TH 31-01-19
- r 17-18 - UCQ Feedback Letter
- s 17-18 - UCQ - SQPM Proforma 2017-18
- t 17-18 - OU letter 2018 signed off
- u OU Handbook for Validated Awards
- v Meetings with students
- w Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- x Meeting by phone with a Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager at the OU
- y Meetings with representatives of employers of students.

258 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:

259 Third party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at UCQ.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

260 External examiner reports: no sampling was necessary as there is a single external examiner for this programme. The team considered all four reports to date plus the responses from UCQ.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

261 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.

262 The review team considered the General Regulations, the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards, Quality Policy for Learning, the Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement and signed versions of this agreement with four employers, Student Handbook, UCQ's annual monitoring reports, and feedback to this from the OU, the Delivery Venue Vetting Form, and the Employer Progress Review form to assess how the provider ensures courses are high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them and to assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring a high-quality academic experience in partnership work.

263 The team examined the template for partnership agreements between UCQ and employers, signed versions of this agreement with four employers, the Handbook for Validated Partnerships and UCQ's General Regulations to test the basis for the maintenance of high quality within specific partnerships, and that those arrangements are in line with the provider's regulations or policies.

264 External examiner reports were scrutinised by the team to test that the examiner considers the course delivered in partnership to be of high quality.

265 The team also met UCQ staff and students, the Senior Partnerships Manager at the OU and representatives of employers of students to test whether staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body, that the awarding body and employers understand their responsibilities, and to assess students' views about quality of courses delivered in partnership.

What the evidence shows

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

267 The Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University set out UCQ's responsibilities in respect of its partnership with the OU regarding the admission, registration and assessment of students and provides clear and comprehensive information about the responsibilities of each party; in particular, they confirm that responsibility for all aspects of the academic delivery of the programme rest with UCQ. The Student Handbook provides students with an understanding of how the relationships between the OU, UCQ and their employers work in practice, and information about where to seek support regarding the various aspects of the student experience. UCQ's plans to ensure a high-quality academic

experience for provision delivered in partnership with the OU are based on template documentation provided by the awarding body. Annual reports and feedback from the OU, as well as confirmation from the OU that UCQ had completed the annual review for that year, confirm that both the OU and UCQ review all aspects of the provision, as outlined in the General Regulations and the schedule within the OU's Handbook for Validated Awards. UCQ's approach to working with the OU is credible and robust because it is based on the OU's requirements for ensuring the high quality of programmes and is evidence-based because it ensures annual monitoring and review of the delivery of the programme.

268 The partnership agreements between UCQ and the OU and between UCQ and employers are contained respectively in the Handbook for Validated Partnerships and the Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement and are exemplified in the signed versions of this agreement with four employers. These agreements are aligned with UCQ's General Regulations.

269 The external examiner's reports confirm that the quality of the programme is high and raise no concerns regarding any aspect of UCQ's partnerships. The reports confirm, for instance, that module guides clearly set out objectives and learning outcomes and offer clear instructions and guidance on assessment tasks.

270 The Employer and Provider Apprenticeship Training Agreement and the examples of signed versions of this agreement with four employers (Santander, Maersk Training, CSG and Rentokil Initial) set out the contractual basis for UCQ's relationship with the organisations which are the employers of its students. The Delivery Venue Vetting Form provides an understanding of UCQ's approach to the assessment of the suitability of employers' premises and facilities for the operation of the programme, and the Employer Progress Review showed how UCQ's approach includes scheduled discussions between the employer, provider and apprentice to support successful outcomes for students. UCQ's approach to its partnerships with employers is credible and robust because it is based on a contractual agreement with each employer, and is evidence-based because it makes use of a consistent approach to assessing and monitoring the delivery of the programme.

271 Academic and professional support staff expressed their commitment to effective partnerships through the use of technology to ensure that the student experience was the same regardless of the location of students, and expressed their understanding of their responsibilities towards the OU in relation to assessment of students' work, to the operation of examining boards and to the annual monitoring process. The OU's Senior Partnerships Manager confirmed the OU's view that the relationship with UCQ was working well and that each party was meeting its responsibilities. Representatives of employers affirmed that they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and that they regard UCQ's programme as being of high quality in respect of meeting the needs of their organisations.

272 Students who met the team expressed satisfaction with the arrangements between their employer and UCQ to deliver the programme to the standard they expected, noting in particular the successful use of videoconferencing to facilitate support from academic staff at UQC. The student submission affirms that students are happy with the learning locations and the flexibility of the programme. The review team concluded that students have generally positive views about the quality of courses delivered in partnership.

Conclusions

273 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.

274 UCQ 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. This is because UCQ has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience for provision for its students that ensures that UCQ academic and professional support staff are in control of the delivery of its programme throughout the student journey. It also has clear and comprehensive policies for the management of partnerships with its students' employers, and with the OU, to ensure a high-quality experience. Partnership agreements seen by the team are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect the provider's regulations. External examiner reports and employers confirm that the academic experience is high quality, and staff from UCQ and from the OU, as well as representatives of employers, understand their responsibilities for the delivery of a high-quality programme. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

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

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

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

277 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

278 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 Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement
- b Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- c Student Handbook
- d Self-Assessment Report
- e Assignment Submission and Feedback Policy
- f Collation of student survey results
- g Sample Employer Progress Review - 1
- h Sample Employer Progress Review - 2
- i Sample Audio Employer Progress Review
- j UCQ student submission
- k Lesson observation 2 (PDA support session)
- l Assessments and feedback
- m Meetings with students
- n Meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

279 Student views: no sampling was necessary as the Centre offers a single programme. The review team examined the student submission and the results of the internal Quayside Student Survey.

280 Assessed student work: the review team examined a representative sample of 36 pieces of assessed student work from all 12 modules that have been delivered by the Centre so far. This included high, average and low grades for each module.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

281 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.

282 The review team scrutinised the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, the Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement, Student Handbook, the Self-Assessment Report, examples of reviews from employers of the progress of individual students, as well as observation of a learning session to identify the provider's approach to student support, including how it identifies and monitors the needs of individual students.

283 The team examined the Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement, the Student Handbook, and the Self-Assessment Report to assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The team also observed a support session and had access to reviews from employers.

284 The team considered results from UCQ's internal student survey, the student submission and meetings with students in order to identify students' views about student support mechanisms.

285 The team examined a sample of assessed work as well as the Assignment Submission and Feedback Policy to test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback.

286 The team met students and academic and professional support staff to assess students' views about student support mechanisms and to test whether staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported.

What the evidence shows

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

288 UCQ's strategy for learning, teaching and assessment is detailed in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, which presents UCQ's overall approach and clarifies the role and responsibilities of teaching staff to support students' development. It identifies and monitors the needs of individual students by means of a system of personalised support for students with specific needs using ILPs. The Individual Learning Plan and Commitment Statement is used to shape individual support plans, supported by regular progress meetings with Professional Development Assessors and Employer Mentors. These support arrangements are reinforced by personal development planning and student progress reviews, as described in the Student Handbook, and in the Self-Assessment Report. Examples provided of reviews from employers of the progress of individual students confirmed that students' development reflects current practice in their industry and that students can apply acquired knowledge to their practice. An observation of a support session provided further evidence of the supportive approach adopted by the Professional Development Assessor to the student, as the session addressed aspects of the student's job role and some of their current challenges in the workplace and their studies.

289 UCQ's approach is credible and robust because the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy sets out the respective responsibilities of students, of teaching staff and of UCQ itself, and sets out the entitlements of students in respect of the delivery of the programme. The approach is evidence-based because individual support plans are monitored by means of regular progress meetings for each student.

290 The sample of assessed work showed that comprehensive, helpful and developmental feedback was provided in every piece of assessed work in the sample. Developmental feedback, enabling students to improve their work for subsequent

assessments, was provided in both formative and summative assessments. UCQ's policy is that feedback should be given for formative assessments within seven days and for summative assessments within 15 days to 20 days, depending on operational circumstances.

291 Students who met the team expressed satisfaction with the quality of feedback for their assessed work and confirmed that they were aware of the published timescales for the return of assessed work and that, generally, assessed work is graded and returned to them within these timescales. They also commented positively about the responsiveness and helpfulness of support provided across the programme and affirmed that, based on their experience of employment alongside their studies, the programme was successful in enabling both their professional and academic development. Students affirmed that they particularly valued the personalised engagement offered by the Professional Development Assessor role and the supportive and developmental feedback given by tutors, both informally and formally. In the 2018 internal student survey, to which 93% of an unknown number of students responded, 86% of responses indicated agreement with the statement that 'I have been able to contact staff when I needed to', 71% of responses indicated agreement with the statement that 'I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course', 57% indicated agreement with the statement that 'Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course', 43% indicated agreement with the statement that 'Feedback on my work has been timely', and 71% indicated agreement with the statement that 'I have received helpful comments on my work'. The student submission affirms the views of students that UCQ generally meets its published timescales for providing feedback for assessed work. The team formed the view that students have generally positive views about student support mechanisms.

292 Academic and professional support staff expressed their commitment to supporting students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and were able, for instance, to describe the role of the Professional Development Assessors in monitoring students' progress regularly by maintaining close contact with both the student and the employer through webinars, emails and telephone calls, and to express UCQ's approach in terms of carefully linking theory to practice in the workplace. The review team concluded that staff understand their role in supporting students to achieve successful outcomes, both professionally and academically.

Conclusions

293 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.

294 UCQ supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because its approach to student support focuses on such outcomes and its plans to support students to achieve are evidence-based, robust and credible. The team noted that students were consistent in agreeing that they are adequately supported to achieve, and the assessed student work seen by the team demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. It was clear to the team that staff (both academic and professional support) understand their role in supporting student achievement.

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

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