DQB

Designated Quality Body
in England

Assessment for Variation of Degree Awarding Powers

BPP University Limited

Review Report

March 2020

Contents

Summary of the assessment team's conclusions

Underpinning DAPs criteria	
Criterion A: Academic governance	Met
Criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks	Met
Criterion B2: Academic standards	Met
Criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience	Met
Criterion C: Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff	Met
Criterion D: Environment for supporting students	Met
Criterion E: Evaluation of performance	Met
Overarching criterion	
The provider is a self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems	Met

About this report

This is a report of an assessment of BPP University Limited (the University) conducted by QAA in March 2020 under the Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs).

Assessment for the variation and revocation of DAPs is the process QAA uses to provide advice to the Office for Students (OfS) about the quality of, and the standards applied to, higher education delivered by a provider in England that has an existing DAPs authorisation and where variation or revocation is to be considered.

The assessment was conducted in order to inform advice to the OfS on whether the University's existing renewable powers should be granted on an indefinite basis.

About BPP University

Provider details	
Legal name	BPP University Ltd
Trading name	BPP University
UKPRN	10031982
Type of institution	Higher Education Institution (HEI)
Date founded	1992
Date of first HE provision	2008
Application route	Variation of Degree Awarding Powers (time-limited to indefinite)
Level of powers applied for	Taught degree (up to Level 7)

Location(s) of teaching	Abingdon, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, London and Manchester Nursing programmes delivered directly out of NHS premises in Doncaster, Hampshire, Kettering and Southampton International delivery sites at Roots Ivy International School (Private) Limited (Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad); London College of Legal Studies (South); YK Business School Ltd; SAM Caribbean Ltd
Subject(s) applied for	All subjects
Current powers held (if applicable)	Taught degree awarding powers (renewable)
Date current powers granted (if applicable)	1 September 2013 (The OfS varied the DAPs order for a period of one year to 31 August 2020 with effect from 1 September 2019)
Number of current programmes as at January 2020 (from Provider Information Form)	58 bachelor's and master's degree programmes, eight degree apprenticeships, six transnational education programmes (being taught out) and 12 professional programmes
Number of students as at March 2020 (student and staff numbers submitted as evidence on 18 March 2020)	13, 637 (9,471 full-time/4,166 part-time) in total. This includes 11,402 postgraduate students and 2,235 undergraduate students
Number of staff as at March 2020 (student and staff numbers submitted as evidence on 18 March 2020)	1,167 total staff (483 full-time; 684 part-time) comprising: 886 academic staff, including 263 full-time staff (including staff on a 0.8 contract and above) and 623 part-time staff (including staff on a 0.7 contract and below or freelance contract) and 281 academic administration/management staff (220 full-time; 61 part-time)

BPP University's history dates back to 1992 when the BPP Law School was founded. In 2005, the BPP Law School was rebranded as the BPP College of Professional Education, which was awarded renewable taught degree awarding powers in 2007. Reflecting its ethos to provide professional education and to work in partnership with industry, in 2009, the BPP University Business School (rebranded as the School of Business and Technology in 2018) was established. In 2010, BPP College of Professional Education became a university college and in 2011, the School of Health was established. In 2013, university title followed. In 2018 a fourth school, the School of Nursing, was established and in 2018, BPP University successfully registered with the OfS.

The University regards employability as central to its mission, which is to build careers through education. It currently works with 400 employers and approximately one quarter of its students are sponsored by an employer. The University supports a Students' Association which provides a voice for the student body through 32 student representatives from across the four schools. The University is also currently involved in partnership activity with employers, for the delivery of apprenticeship programmes and other work-based learning

opportunities; with transnational delivery support partners in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mauritius and Trinidad; and with the College of Medicine and Dentistry.

How the assessment was conducted

The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of the University according to the process set out in [Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers](#), December 2019.

The team appointed to conduct the assessment was as follows:

Name: Jeremy Bradshaw
Institution: University of Bath
Role in the assessment team: Institutional reviewer

Name: Mary Blauciak
Institution: formerly University of Derby and Manchester College
Role in assessment team: Institutional reviewer

Name: Catherine Fairhurst
Institution: University of Manchester
Role in assessment team: Institutional reviewer

Name: Matthew Kitching
Institution: Bucks Students' Union, Buckinghamshire New University
Role in assessment team: Student reviewer

The QAA Officer was Irene Ainsworth.

The size and composition of this 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 in terms of recent acquisition of university title, knowledge of the academic awards offered and included academics with subject expertise. 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 a senior academic leader qualified to doctoral level. Details of team members were shared with the University prior to the assessment to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

The team conducted the assessment by reference to a range of evidence gathered. The criteria used in relation to this assessment are those that apply in England as set out in paragraphs 215-216, and in Annex C, of the OfS's regulatory framework. To support the clarity of communication between providers and QAA, the DAPs criteria and evidence requirements from the OfS's regulatory framework have been given unique identifiers and are reproduced in Annex 4 of Degree *Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment by QAA*, October 2019.

This was conducted as a desk-based only assessment in accordance with the referral from OfS. In the course of the assessment, the team read 134 documents presented in support of the application. An initial set of 66 documents was provided as supporting evidence with the self-assessment document. Following a desk-based assessment of this initial evidence against the DAPs criteria, a request for additional evidence was made. This request covered areas from all five DAPs criteria which had been identified as requiring follow-up investigation. An additional 68 documents were provided in response. Key themes pursued

in the course of the assessment included the roles, responsibilities and relationships between different bodies involved in academic governance; the means by which the University scrutinises and monitors student data, including completion and non-continuation data, to establish that its programmes, support and resources provide students with a high-quality academic experience and enable student development and achievement. The team also explored risk management; oversight and management of collaborative partnerships; the University's approach to programme design, approval, monitoring and review, including the use of external involvement within this; the approach to scholarship, staff development and support provided for teaching, learning and assessment; the extent of staff engagement with external bodies; and student engagement.

The team sampled the following areas of evidence. Details of the evidence the team considered are provided in the Explanation of findings section of this report, below.

a   A representative and random sample of Programme Approval Record Certificates.

b   A random sample of programme approval and annual programme monitoring review reports.

c   A random sample of assessed work, including the assessment brief, marked scripts and markers' guide.

d   A representative and random sample of annual programme monitoring reports.

e   A representative and random sample of Programme Committee minutes.

f   A representative and random sample of formal complaints outcomes and academic appeals outcomes.

g   A representative and random sample of staff CVs.

Explanation of findings

Criterion A: Academic governance

Criterion A1: Academic governance

1   This criterion states that:

A1.1   An organisation granted degree awarding powers has effective academic governance, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities.

A1.2   Academic governance, including all aspects of the control and oversight of its higher education provision, is conducted in partnership with its students.

A1.3   Where an organisation granted degree awarding powers works with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities, it ensures that its governance and management of such opportunities is robust and effective and that decisions to work with other organisations are the result of a strategic approach rather than opportunism.

2   The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence considered and why the team considered this evidence

3   The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in the *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance.

a   To test that the University's higher education mission and strategic direction and associated policies are coherent, published, understood and applied consistently, the team considered the Academic Development Plan (2019-2022) [014], the Scholarship Strategy (2019-2022) [015], the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2019-2022) [016], the Career Ready Strategy (2019-2022) [017], the Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report 2018-19 [027], the QAA Annual Monitoring Report [010], external examiners' reports [031], and Academic Council minutes [038].

b   To determine whether the University's academic policies support its higher education mission, aims and objectives, the General Academic Regulations [001], the Academic Council minutes [038], and the Manual of Policies and Procedures [002] were considered.

c   To test that there is clarity and differentiation of function and responsibility at all levels in the organisation, and that the function and responsibility of the senior academic authority is clearly articulated and consistently applied, the following documents were consulted: External Governance Reviews [045], the Articles of Association [003], General Academic Regulations [001], minutes of the Board of Directors 2018-2019 [071], Position Statement [068], the Academic Risk Framework [072], the Student Protection Plan [018], Academic Council minutes [038], report and papers between Board of Directors and Academic Council [070], Education and

Standards Committee minutes [041], Academic Regulations and Awards Committee minutes [039], and details of academic structural changes [047].

d   To determine the depth and strength of academic leadership, the team scrutinised the General Academic Regulations [001], and the CVs of the members of the Senior Leadership Team [021].

e   To understand how the University develops, implements and communicates its policies and procedures in collaboration with its staff and students and external stakeholders, the team considered the General Academic Regulations [001], Education and Standards Committee minutes [041], Academic Council minutes [038], student written submissions [012, 013], Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [31], External Reviews [044], and Programme Approval minutes [42].

f   To make a judgement on whether the University will manage successfully the responsibilities that would be vested in it were it to be granted indefinite degree awarding powers, the team examined the Ofsted Report 2019 relating to apprenticeship programmes [011] and the Annual External Examiner Summary Report [031].

g   To understand how academic governance at the University is conducted in partnership with its students, the team considered the self-assessment document [000], the Scholarship Strategy [015], the Career Ready Strategy [017], the General Academic Regulations [001], Academic Council minutes [38], Academic Regulations and Awards Committee minutes [39], and Education and Standards Committee minutes [41].

h   To determine how the University works with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities the team examined the Academic Collaborations Annual Report 2018-19 [025], the self-assessment document [000], the General Academic Regulations [001], Academic Collaborations Report Transnational Provision February 2020 [076], QAA Annual Monitoring Review Report [010], Manual of Policies and Procedures [002], Academic Due Diligence Report [074], Collaborative Agreement Roots Ivy International Schools (Private) Limited [075], Academic Regulations and Awards Committee minutes [039], Academic Council minutes [038], Annual Academic Quality Report 2018-19 [022], School Education and Standards Board minutes [132], Academic Council Minutes [038], and the University's responses to requests for additional information as sent to the team [134].

i   To understand how and where scrutiny of student data occurs within the University, the team considered the Position Statement: Scrutiny of Student Data [077], School Education and Standards Board minutes [132], Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Committee minutes [125], Education and Standards Committee minutes [041], Academic Regulations and Awards Committee minutes [039], and Board of Director minutes [071].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

4   The volume of evidence relating to criterion A was sufficiently small to enable the team to assess all the documents provided and therefore no sampling was undertaken.

What the evidence shows

5   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

6   The Academic Development Plan (2019-2022) [014] sets out the University's academic development priorities for the five key principles of curriculum development, academic and graduate outcomes, academic community development, the student experience, and academic risk and regulation. The priorities have been informed by a focus on data-driven decision-making, positive outcomes for all and simplification. The Plan includes the University's mission statement, which may be summarised as 'To build careers through education', with the underpinning aims to 'bridge the gap between education and professional practice; be a confident academic community underpinned by scholarship; embrace change and be at the cutting edge in the use of technology and learning spaces in the delivery and assessment of our programmes; and ensure positive regulatory outcomes.' The key principles align with the University's higher education mission, aims and objectives. The Plan is supported by three strategies: the Scholarship Strategy (2019-2022) [015]; the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2019-2022) [016]; and the Career Ready Strategy (2019-2022) [017].

7   The Scholarship Strategy [015] clearly identifies the importance of the scholarly activity of the academic staff for underpinning their teaching and commits the University to promote such activity and provide opportunities for it. The Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy [016] defines six principles: excellence in learning, teaching and assessment; curriculum development; students as partners in learning; flexible learning spaces; professional development of staff; and a cohesive approach to graduate employability. Individually and collectively, these principles underpin the Academic Development Plan. In accordance with the University's mission statement, to build careers through education, the Career Ready Strategy [017] describes how the University will provide extensive employability opportunities through curricular and extracurricular activities. The defined principles include partnership with the student body and engagement with the alumni network. The higher education mission statement, the Academic Development Plan and its three supporting strategies: the Scholarship Strategy (2019-2022) [015]; the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2019-2022) [016]; and the Career Ready Strategy (2019-2022) [017]; form a coherent whole and provide a clear sense of strategic direction and intent. Academic Council minutes indicate the formation of a subcommittee to maintain oversight of the strategies and their implementation [038].

8   Examples of the consistent application of the principles defined in these documents include the encouragement to staff to achieve Higher Education Academy Fellowship status and recording and monitoring progress towards this [027], in support of the Scholarship Strategy [015]. Evidence of progress made with the Career Ready Strategy [017] to date can be found in the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031] which identifies the practical relevance of learning materials used and the 'imaginative, practice-focussed assessment instruments' and 'aspects of employability and professional ethos that permeate the programmes' as key strengths. The six principles identified in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy [016] reflect the University's commitment to a closer alignment between education and professional practice in learning, teaching and assessment, through exposing students to authentic and real-world practices/contexts to support graduate employability, underpinned by high-quality teaching and scholarship.

9   Academic Council and Education and Standards Committee minutes [038, 041] show the involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders in an iterative process of preparing the Academic Development Plan and its underpinning strategies and refer to the use of a strategy roadshow for staff and tutors to embed and implement actions from across the three strategies supporting the Plan. The higher education mission statement, the Academic Development Plan and its three supporting strategies: the Scholarship Strategy (2019-2022) [015]; the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2019-2022) [016]; and the Career Ready Strategy (2019-2022) [017] are coherent, clear and are readily available

on the University website, and have been subject to consultation and detailed consideration to ensure that they are understood.

10   The General Academic Regulations (GARs) [001] contain a comprehensive and transparent set of regulations covering the following: conferment of awards; programmes of study, their approval and monitoring; student admission and registration; academic progression; and assessment, including academic appeals and complaints. The regulations, and any subsequent amendments, are approved by the Academic Council which is the University's senior academic authority [001, 038] and, as such, is responsible for establishing policy in relation to programme approval, monitoring and closure, assessments, awards and academic misconduct and for maintaining oversight of academic quality. The Manual of Policies and Procedures [002] has been developed in support of the GARs and takes its authority from them. It describes how the University addresses a number of processes and functions that enable it to carry out its mission, including the approval and further development of academic programmes that align with its mission and Academic Development Plan, including the use of appropriate external input to programme design. It describes a rigorous approach to the appointment of teaching staff, with clear expectations in terms of expertise and experience. Section C provides further information about the outcomes of the University's approach to staffing. The Academic Council's role in establishing and overseeing the implementation of policies supporting the University's higher education mission, aims and objectives ensures that the policies support the University's higher education mission, aims and objectives and are consistently applied.

11   The University bases its governance framework on the Corporate Governance Guidance and Principles for Unlisted Companies in the UK, published by the Institute of Directors, as confirmed by the details of external governance reviews [045]. The Articles of Association [003] define the structure of the institution and the way in which it functions. Supreme authority rests with the Board of Directors, with academic authority delegated to an Academic Council. Together, these two bodies fulfil the governance functions of the University. The University Leadership Team fulfils the executive functions. The Articles of Association [003] clearly describe the objectives, powers, composition and responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the authority of the Academic Council. These are further clarified in the GARs [001], which define the roles and responsibilities of the Directors and the Academic Council.

12   The Board of Directors is legally responsible for determining the educational character and mission of the University and for overseeing its activities [001]. Minutes of the Board of Directors 2018-2019 [071] and the Position Statement [068] clearly show that the Board of Directors is fulfilling its role. Standing agenda items are Financials, Strategic/Risk Discussion, Committee Reports and Annual Reports. The discussion of strategy and risk follows a programme of topics determined by the Chair of the Board working together with the Secretary [068]. The Academic Risk Framework [072] provides examples of identified risks and a treatment plan for each individual risk. The overall risk to the University is assessed through an understanding of proximity, likelihood and impact. Where the inherent risk is above the risk appetite, mitigation must be identified, and the residual risk assessed. The Framework contains a heat map of risks pre and post-mitigation. The Student Protection Plan [018] evidences the critical consideration, by the Board of Directors, of risk and how to mitigate it. Committee reports include those of the Audit Committee and the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, both of which report directly to the Board of Directors, as described in the GARs [001]. The GARs [001] also include an organogram of the University's committees that report to the Academic Council either directly or via the Education and Standards Committee, and define the terms of reference and membership of each of these Committees. The team considered that the academic governance structures and arrangements for managing the University's higher education provision clearly define the responsibilities and functions of the different bodies involved.

13   As outlined in the GARs [001], the Academic Council is the University's primary academic authority. Its principal role is to establish policy for academic programmes, assessments and awards, and to maintain oversight of academic quality and standards. It also advises the Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to awarding taught degrees. Academic Council is chaired by an independent member and includes five further independent members drawn from academia and the professions, six ex officio members, two elected staff representatives and two elected student representatives. The GARs [001] clearly articulate the function and responsibility of the Academic Council and Academic Council minutes [038] show evidence of the Academic Council operating in accordance with its remit, exercising oversight of the effectiveness of academic governance arrangements, regulations, policies and procedures consistent with its function and responsibility. For example, the Academic Council considered the need for changes to be made to the committees and governance of the University as it responds to changes in the regulatory landscape. The document Academic Structural Changes [047] describes changes which include refinements to the terms of reference and membership of committees to reduce overlap and repetition, the increased use of delegated authority and a focus on key regulatory outcomes. In order to ensure an effective working relationship with an appropriate division of responsibilities between the Board of Directors and the Council, the Chair of the Council is a member of the Board and a summary of each Council meeting is reported to the Board as a standing agenda item [068]. The report and papers between the Board and Council [070] demonstrate clarity and differentiation of function and responsibility between the Board and the Council for the University's higher education provision, and indicate that the Board exercises oversight and focuses on areas of strategic importance and risk. Academic Council feeds into Board discussions through the independent Chair of Council and Council report summaries.

14   Academic Council delegates responsibility for some of its remit to the Education and Standards Committee and, through that committee, to the Student Assessment Retention and Achievement (SARA) Committee, Ethics Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee, and School Education and Standards Boards [001]. The School Education and Standards Boards are responsible for safeguarding the standards of academic awards and other educational provision within each school [001]. Minutes of this Committee [041] show it to be functioning within its remit, including consideration of University policy and practice, and University strategy, development and quality monitoring. The Academic Regulations and Awards (ARA) Committee minutes [039] record the Committee receiving minutes of the various boards of examiners, discussing completions statistics from each of the schools, and considering trends in the instances of academic misconduct, all of which evidences effective oversight of students' performance on the programmes delivered by the University.

15   The Position Statement: Scrutiny of Student Data [077] and documents cited within it (minutes of Education and Standards Board [132], SARA Committee [125], Education and Standards Committee [041], ARA Committee [039] and Board of Directors [071]) provide ample evidence of the University's scrutiny of student performance and outcomes data through the committee structure. The Annual Admissions Report, including detailed analysis on admissions and recruitment metrics, is reported to the Education and Standards Committee and the Academic Council [041, 038]. The Board of Directors also receives a report on admissions and recruitment and updates on the University's academic performance. Student achievement and retention data, student continuation and employability outcomes data [129] are reviewed by the SARA Committee [132]. Reports on student achievement and completion statistics are received by the ARA Committee [039]. School Education and Standards Boards consider admissions and recruitment in addition to student outcomes data relating to achievement, degree classifications, completions, retention, continuation and progression, employability outcomes and student satisfaction metrics. The Position Statement [077] indicates that non-continuation, retention and achievement project activity undertaken by the University has resulted in improved

continuation rates of full-time first-degree students and shows that the University routinely and systematically gathers data sets, scrutinises and analyses them and acts to secure improvements, where required.

16   The GARs [001] clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team which, under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, is the University's senior management team with executive responsibility for organising, directing and managing the academic and academic-related functions of the University. The Team includes the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education Services), the Deans of School and the Dean of Academic Quality, the Associate Dean (Education Services) and the Director of Academic Quality. The curricula vitae of members of the Senior Leadership Team, who between them have University-wide and School-level responsibilities, indicate that they have relevant academic and professional experience, including wider engagement with the higher education sector through, for example, serving as an external examiner, fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, publishing and speaking at national higher education events, and serving as a reviewer for higher education national and regulatory bodies. All record experience consistent with the seniority of the posts held [021]. The team considered that there is appropriate depth and strength of academic leadership.

17   University committee membership encompasses wide representation across the institution, thereby facilitating the involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders in the development of its policies and procedures. Academic Council has an independent chair and representation, in the form of the Dean, from each of the schools [001]. The other University committees, including those that report directly to the Academic Council, have memberships typically comprising a number of academic and professional services staff, together with student members [001]. The University's approach to the development of the Academic Development Plan and its underpinning strategies, demonstrates the University's commitment to develop, implement and communicate its policies and procedures in collaboration with its staff, students and external stakeholders [038, 041]. The student written submissions 2018-19 and 2019-20 [012, 013] provide further evidence of student involvement in the development, implementation and communication of the University's policies and procedures, not least the acknowledgement within the 2019-20 student written submission that the meeting with the Senior Leadership Team has enabled student voice representatives to represent their peer groups to the University at the highest level. In addition to the external input to the University's deliberations from the reports of external examiners [31] and external accreditations [044], programme approval boards have external members including, where appropriate, practitioners who are able to bring their experience to bear in ensuring the academic and professional relevance and currency of the University's provision in line with the University's mission [042].

18   The University has held degree awarding powers for 13 years and, during this period, has undergone a number of external reviews by the QAA, Ofsted and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) including the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), Bar Standards Board (BSB), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) and the General Chiropractic Council (GCC), each of which confirms that the University continues to meet expectations for the quality and standards of its academic provision. Recommendations included in such reports [011] and in the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], which collates and analyses the comments made by external examiners on key strengths and areas for improvement, are consistently addressed on an appropriate timescale. Each area for improvement is assigned to an action point and a response from the appropriate school is recorded. Together, these documents provide evidence that the University is currently managing successfully its responsibilities for

taught degree awarding powers and its track record suggests that it will continue to do so, were it to be granted indefinite taught degree awarding powers.

19   The University claims in its self-assessment document [000] that its students are valued partners in its academic governance and management. The principle of students as partners is explicitly stated in the Scholarship Strategy 2019-2022 [015] and the Career Ready Strategy [017]. Students are represented in the membership of each of the major academic governance committees that oversee the University's higher education provision. The GARs [001] define the membership of these committees and records student members of the Academic Council, the Education and Standards Committee, School Education and Standards Boards, the SARA Committee, the ARA Committee, and the Equality and Diversity Committee. In some committees, the student member voice is represented by the President of the Students' Association, in others by student representatives, and in some by both. Academic Council, the ARA Committee and Education and Standards Committee minutes [038, 039, 041] confirm student membership and attendance and demonstrate that students are playing an active role in committee deliberations.

20   The annual student written submission (SWS), in addition to describing the various opportunities for student engagement with the University, the student representative structures and the training for student representatives, provides examples of effective student engagement in the governance and management of the institution. These include student representation on University-level committees and the provision of support for annual away days for students as part of the preparation of the annual SWS produced by the Students' Association which identifies good practice and affirmations and includes recommendations to the University [012, 013]. The SWS [013] describes the Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) as an essential mechanism of cohort representation and reports that in the 2019-20 academic year, the Student Voice Manager worked with University staff to improve the SSLC process and to develop a training video for SSLC representatives. Academic Council minutes record deliberation of the SWS [038]. The GARs [001] detail the terms of reference and membership of the SSLCs, which are required for each credit-bearing programme. The SSLC remit includes both the gathering of student feedback and reporting back to the student body on any action taken. There is clear evidence that academic governance at the University, including all aspects of the control and oversight of its higher education provision, is conducted in partnership with its students.

21   The GARs [001] define the different models of collaboration that the University recognises and sets out the principles and requirements for the establishment of new partnerships and the ongoing monitoring of existing partnerships. The GARs clearly state that ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards, quality of learning and awards granted under a collaborative arrangement lies with the Academic Council [001]. The Manual of Policies and Procedures (MoPPs) [002] describes the procedures by which the University approves and, where necessary, suspends or terminates, collaborative partnerships. In 2018-19, the Academic Collaboration Annual Report noted that 24 of the University's programmes were delivered through 151 collaborative partnerships, involving a total of 1,792 students [025]. This was a reduction on the previous year, when there were 27 programmes and 168 partnerships. The GARs [001] define an 'approved partner' as one which delivers a specific collaborative venture with the University. Such partners provide specified services to students under contract to the University on programmes that lead to a BPP University award, including the provision of work-based learning opportunities. The University also has 10 'endorsed providers' who provide optional pastoral and academic support to students in transnational delivery support partnerships. This third-party support is not required to complete the programmes; it is provided through a contract directly between the student and a third party [000] and the GARs document confirms that services provided do not lead to credit or form an integral part of the programme [001]. Examples of this type of partnership are Roots Ivy University College, London College of Legal Studies (South) and

the School of Accounting and Management, which provide academic and infrastructure support directly to students in the Law School and the School of Business and Technology [076]. There is a subcontracted arrangement with the College of Medicine and Dentistry to provide the teaching and assessment on a range of Master of Clinical Dentistry programmes to around 80 BPP University students. The Academic Collaboration Annual Report provides clear information regarding the status of partnerships and reports that this partnership came about through a management buyout by the dentistry team [000, 025]. These programmes are currently being taught out, with the expectation that all students will complete their programmes by 2020.

22   Approval of a new partner is a two-stage process, initiated by a Dean of School, by submission of a proposal to the Vice-Chancellor, through the Academic Collaborations Office [002]. When the Vice-Chancellor decides to allow the proposal to proceed to the second stage, it proceeds to the ARA Committee. The stage two process includes consideration of a business case, the national context and suitability, and an assessment of the standing of the potential partner and its ability to enter into a legal agreement with the University. The preparation of an Academic Due Diligence Report is a requirement [002]. Each partnership is bound by a legal agreement, signed by the Vice-Chancellor. An example of an Academic Risk Assessment and Due Diligence Report [074] illustrates how the University carries out due diligence and assessment of the academic risk of a proposed new collaborative partner in accordance with the process described in the MoPPs [002]. The document records effective mechanisms for estimation and consideration of the risks and initial approval by the relevant Dean and the Director of Academic Collaborations. The Academic Due Diligence Report [074] and the legal contract [075] show that the defined procedures are being carried out effectively. Confirmation of the scrutiny and deliberation of the due diligence for a proposed new partnership is recorded in the minutes of the ARA Committee [039], a report on which is then sent to Academic Council [038].

23   The example of the Collaborative Agreement with Roots Ivy International Schools (Private) Limited [075] is a comprehensive and clearly stated contract between the two parties, unambiguously setting out the responsibilities of each party, including the appointment of staff, provision of learning resources, delivery of the programme and arrangements for existing students should the agreement be terminated. There is a separate procedure for the approval of employer partners for work-based learning opportunities, which may be approved by the relevant Dean of School. The procedure also requires the completion of a due diligence report [002]. The Academic Collaborations Office assists with the formal approval process and keeps a record of all collaborative arrangements [002; Academic Collaborations Annual Report 2018-19, 025]. The arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review as described in the GARs [001] and the MoPPs [002] provide robust and effective oversight of the University's collaborative provision at institutional and school level. The Academic Council receives an annual report on the collaborative arrangements it has approved [025, 076], with a critical appraisal of each active partnership, detailing the quality of teaching and learning, learning resources, student voice and student performance, and identifying areas requiring action with associated timelines and allocated responsibility for addressing them [002; Academic Council minutes, 038; Response to request for additional information February 2020, 134]. School Education and Standards Boards minutes [132] also demonstrate that partnerships are included as an agenda item where relevant [Annual Academic Quality Report 2018-19, 022].

Conclusions

24   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

25   After careful consideration of the evidence presented in the Academic Development Plan and its three underpinning strategies, and correlating these to reports and committee papers, the team reached the view that University's higher education mission and strategic direction and associated policies are coherent, published, understood, applied consistently and underpinned by the University's routine preparation, analysis and deliberation of student performance datasets. The University's policies, processes and regulations clearly show alignment with the Academic Development Plan and the three sub-strategies, demonstrating that the University's academic policies support its higher education mission, aims and objectives.

26   There is clarity and differentiation of function and responsibility at all levels in the organisation in relation to its academic governance structures and arrangements for managing its higher education provision, and the function and responsibility of the senior academic authority is clearly articulated and consistently applied. Governance and executive functions are clear, the former resting with the Board of Directors and the Academic Council, and the latter in the Senior Leadership Team. The Articles of Association and the GARs explicitly delineate the division of responsibility between the Board of Directors and Academic Council and the responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team. The curricula vitae confirm that there is appropriate depth and strength of academic leadership.

27   The committee structure and membership ensure wide representation of staff, students and external stakeholders in the development, implementation and communication of policies and procedures. The University has shown itself to be capable of managing its higher education provision effectively. Academic governance, including all aspects of the control and oversight of the University's higher education provision, is conducted in partnership with its students, as evidenced by the inclusion of student members of the majority of the University's committees. The student written submissions demonstrate an effective working relationship between the University and its students, both in terms of engagement with the officers of the Students' Association and an effective student representation system. There is ample evidence to support the University's claim that students are valued partners in its academic governance and management.

28   The available evidence leads the team to the conclusion that the arrangements with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities are based on a strategic approach, informed by the effective assessment of risk, including the carrying out of due diligence. They are defined in a written legal agreement and are subject to the same robust oversight and governance as the rest of the University's provision. The University has distinguished between different types of collaborative partnerships, has discriminating processes for the approval of a new partner, and robust monitoring and review processes. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Criterion B: Academic standards and quality assurance

Criterion B1 - Regulatory frameworks

29   This criterion states that:

B1.1:   *An organisation granted degree awarding powers has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it awards academic credit and qualifications.*

B1.2:   *A degree awarding organisation maintains a definitive record of each programme and qualification that it approves (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.*

30   The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence the team considered and why the team considered this evidence

31   The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in the *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance as follows.

a   To assess whether the University's academic frameworks and regulations governing its higher education provision are appropriate for the granting of its own taught degrees and to understand where responsibilities reside to ensure that these continue to be appropriate, the team examined the General Academic Regulations [001], Manual of Policies and Procedures [002], Academic Council minutes [038] and Academic Regulations and Awards Committee minutes [039].

b   To establish that the academic frameworks and regulations governing its higher education provision are implemented fully and consistently, the team reviewed the Annual Academic Quality Report 2018-19 [022], the Office of Regulation and Compliance Report [024] and the Learning Teaching and Assessment Annual Report 2018-19 [028].

c   To identify how the University maintains definitive records of programmes and qualifications, including subsequent changes to them, the team considered programme approval documentation for two programmes, which included Programme Approval Record Certificates (PARCs) [055].

d   To establish whether students and alumni are provided with appropriate records of study, the team considered a Record of Academic Achievement [037].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

32   In addition to the LLM Law and Legal Practice PARC [055] provided as part of the initial evidence submitted, the team reviewed the PARCs for an MSc Accounting and Finance, a BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) [Pre-registration Nursing] and an MSc Psychology (Conversion) programme [081], providing a representative and random sample of subjects

and qualification levels covering the four schools, to establish consistency of approach across the University.

What the evidence shows

33   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

34   The University's regulatory framework comprises the GARs [001], which is the primary regulatory instrument in a hierarchy of instruments adopted by the University [001]; the Manual of Policies and Procedures [002]; the BPP Student Handbook [005] and programme handbooks; and a repository of forms and guidance. The University's GARs [001] and MoPPs [002] set out the regulations and associated policies governing all aspects of the University's provision. The MoPPs [002] outline, in detail, appropriate and coherent policies and procedures to support and enforce the academic framework and associated regulations, including Awards (Part B), Programme Approval (Part D), Admissions and Registration (Part F), Examination and Assessment (including rules on student progression, deferrals, extensions, mitigating circumstances, academic malpractice), BPP assessment strategy (Part H) and Complaints and Appeals (Part K). A Student Handbook has been developed by the University and Students' Association working together to produce a student-facing guide which includes reference to the University's regulations, policies and procedures that apply in determining student assessment, progress and achievement [005].

35   The GARs [001] set out details of the various bodies involved in the governance of the award of academic credit and the University's qualifications, and the membership and terms of reference are clear. The University implements its policies and procedures for the award of academic credit and qualifications within a coherent committee structure which reports ultimately to the Academic Council. These include the ARA Committee which is responsible for safeguarding academic awards conferred in the University's name on behalf of the Academic Council [001, 039] and the Education and Standards Committee (ESC) (assisted by School Education and Standards Boards) which is responsible for safeguarding the standards of academic awards and professional qualifications, and for ensuring that programmes enable students to achieve academic standards required for successful completion [001, 041]. In addition, a Mitigating Circumstances Panel and Academic Appeals Board are responsible to the Academic Council for ensuring equity of treatment in relation to student cases considered by the two bodies. The Academic Council, which meets three times a year, maintains oversight of its subcommittees through their minutes and reports which include proposed programme approvals, re-approvals and programme modifications and also matters raised by externals on the University's provision [038]. The SARA Committee, which reports to the Education and Standards Committee, is responsible for the implementation and effectiveness of student retention and achievement, attainment and degree classification initiatives [020].

36   School Deans are responsible for nominating to the Academic Council the chair and members of Boards of Examiners for each programme, group of programmes or module, as appropriate within their School [001]. As indicated above, recommendations from Boards of Examiners relating to students' fulfilment of assessment requirements are scrutinised by ARA which also reviews the proceedings of Boards of Examiners to identify any issues to be drawn to the attention of the Academic Council or other bodies in the University and to review external examiner comments and recommendations, advising on actions, as appropriate [001, 039]. Other bodies involved in safeguarding standards of the University's academic awards and professional qualifications include the Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel (PASP) which is required to ensure that programmes designed and delivered by the University 'give students a fair and reasonable chance of achieving the academic standards required for successful completion'.

37   The University reviews and monitors its performance in implementing the regulatory framework through the Office for Regulation and Compliance which operates under the direction of the Dean of Academic Quality. The annual report produced by this Office [024] sets out, in a clear and evaluative manner, the outcomes of monitoring the operation of procedures for handling concerns, complaints and appeals undertaken to review consistency and fairness, and to ensure that decisions were made in accordance with the regulations. The report includes an Improvement Plan, Enhancement Action Plan and an update on progress from the previous year. The Academic Council's consideration of this and other annual reports, including the Academic Quality Report 2018-19 [022], which refers to the annual review of policies to maintain regulatory compliance and alignment with sector practices, and the Learning Teaching and Assessment Report 2018-19 [028], provide further evidence of the University monitoring the effectiveness of its regulatory framework to check that it is being implemented fully and consistently. The team concludes that the University has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it awards academic credit and qualifications and reviews these to ensure that they are fit for purpose and are implemented consistently and effectively.

38   A definitive list of the University's formally approved programmes is included in the GARs [001]. Following approval by Academic Council, the PARC is distributed by the Academic Quality Office to ensure currency and consistency. The PARC contains comprehensive information, in a standardised format, and is the definitive record of each programme and qualification. The University states that the PARC acts as the reference point for delivery and assessment of each programme [034]. PARCs are easily accessible to applicants and students through the University website [www.bpp.com/about-bpp/bpp-university/academic-quality/general-academic-regulations]. PARCs examined by the team comprehensively cover relevant information, including the award title with stages and credit weighting, date of approval, delivery methods and locations, structure and content, conditions of admission, progression points, programme aims and outcomes, and the learning and teaching strategy [055, 081].

39   Graduating students are provided with records of study (transcripts) and certificates [037]. The transcripts fully reflect the mode of study and student achievement and include a breakdown of module results, an overall aggregate mark and, where appropriate, the award classification. To maintain security, transcripts and certificates are prepared solely by the registry examinations team [000].

Conclusions

40   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

41   The team found that the University has comprehensive and transparent regulations relating to the award of academic credit and qualifications supported by appropriate policies and procedures which it operates within a coherent committee structure, ultimately reporting into the Academic Council. The University's comprehensive academic regulations, policies and procedures are clearly presented in the GARs and MoPPs and articulate how the University governs the award of academic credit and qualifications. They are maintained centrally. Through its deliberative structure, the University reviews its performance regularly and systematically to ensure that its regulations, policies and procedures are effective, consistently applied, and aligned with sector practices. The University maintains a definitive, secure and up-to-date record of each formally approved programme and qualification through Programme Approval Record Certificates which contain comprehensive information, in a standardised format. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Criterion B2 - Academic standards

42 This criterion states that:

B2.1 *An organisation granted degree awarding powers has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications.*

B2.2 *Organisations with degree awarding powers are expected to demonstrate that they are able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that meet the threshold academic standards described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). Organisations with degree awarding powers are expected to demonstrate that the standards that they set and maintain above the threshold are reliable over time and reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.*

43 The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence the team considered and why the team considered this evidence

44 The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance as follows.

a To establish how the University ensures that its higher education qualifications are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies, the team reviewed the GARs [001], the MoPPs [002], examples of proposal forms, including external review of proposals [044], and programme approval reports [042].

b To identify the means by which the University takes appropriate account of relevant external reference points and independent points of expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards, including students, the team reviewed the GARs [001], the MoPPs [002], Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel (PASP) minutes [040], the student written submission 2019-20 [013], external review forms [044], Programme Approval reports [042] and programme approval documentation [055, 080].

c To assess whether the University's programme approval arrangements are robust, applied consistently, and ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with its own academic frameworks and regulations, the team considered Academic Council minutes [038], programme approval reports from three schools [042], three examples of programme proposal forms [055, 080], programme approval documentation and programme approval guidance materials [082].

d To verify that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment, and both the UK threshold standards and the academic standards of the University have been satisfied, the team reviewed the GARs [001], Annual Academic Quality Report [022] and Learning Outcomes training slides [053].

e   To assess whether the University's programme approval monitoring and review arrangements are robust, applied consistently and explicitly address whether the UK threshold standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the University are being maintained, the team reviewed the GARs [001], the MoPPs [002], the Annual Programme Monitoring Review Summary Report 2017-18 considered by the Academic Council [032], programme approval reports [042], ARA Committee minutes [039], the Annual Programme Monitoring Report (APMR) Template [035], and four APMRs (one from each school) [083].

f   To identify the University's use of appropriate external and independent expertise in establishing, and then maintaining, threshold academic standards and comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent level qualifications, the team considered an example of a completed external review of programme form for the LLM Law and Legal Practice and an example of a completed external review of modules form [044], four APMR examples (including responses to external examiners) [083], the Annual External Examiner Report Form Template [036], an example of a completed Annual External Examiner Report [043], the External Examiner Handbook [057] and the Annual External Examiner Summary Report [031].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

45   The team considered two random samples of programme proposal forms from different subject areas [080]; and a random sample of one annual programme monitoring review report (including responses to external examiner reports) from each of the four schools (the Graduate Diploma in Accounting (School of Business and Technology), MSc Healthcare Leadership (School of Nursing), Masters in Clinical Dentistry (School of Health), LLM (Academic) (Law School)) [083] to establish the extent to which these are consistent with the University's regulations and procedures.

What the evidence shows

46   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

47   The GARs [001] and the MoPPs [002] set out the regulations and procedures that apply to programme approval. Programmes must meet nine criteria, including the need for them to be set at the standard appropriate to the level of award; consequently, higher education awards must accord with the Qualifications Frameworks and professional awards must accord with the level set by the relevant professional body. Other criteria refer to the need for programmes to be guided by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and, in particular, that programmes leading to awards of the University are mapped to the Qualifications Frameworks and the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement. Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel minutes [040], programme approval reports [042], external reviews of a programme and a module [044] and programme approval documentation [055, 080] demonstrated that, in all cases, appropriate external reference points had been taken into consideration in line with University regulations and the programme approval process confirmed alignment of programmes with the *Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies* (FHEQ). The FHEQ and the Quality Code are used systematically as reference points during programme approval, monitoring and review to ensure that awards of the University are set at a level which meets UK threshold standards; that new programmes will operate within the University's academic framework [001]; and that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptors.

48   The GARs [001] require that Approval Panels are chaired by an independent member of the Academic Council and include two external academic members [001]. The inclusion of students in programme approval panels provides further external expertise and has been cited as good practice in the most recent student written submission [013]. Subject to the prior approval of the Academic Council, the University may hold joint events with a professional or statutory body for programme approval or re-approval purposes [001]. Programmes are required to take account of relevant external reference points, including professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), employers, career associations and students [002]. The University's provision is closely aligned to PSRB requirements, where appropriate, as evidenced by, for example, the Bar Standards Board's 2019 authorisation of the University to become an Authorised Education and Training Organisation and a joint validation event with the Nurses and Midwifery Council (NMC) in 2020 [042]. The team reviewed evidence that confirmed substantial external consultation and involvement in programme approval processes. This evidence included a report of the University Approval Panel's consideration of an application to validate the Law School's new suite of programmes, June 2019 [042], examples of a completed external review of programme form for the LLM Law and Legal Practice programmes and an external review of modules form for a Level 6 Dispute Resolution module [044].

49   Programme design and approval processes require that programme proposals demonstrate mapping and benchmarking of module learning outcomes to the FHEQ [042, 034]. Validation panel members are required to determine whether the programme design has taken into account relevant University policies, strategic and academic development plans and to ensure that programme outcomes are set at the appropriate level in the FHEQ [002 Part D].The programme approval procedure comprises six stages, starting with a preliminary review by the Vice-Chancellor at stage 1 and culminating in consideration by the Board of Directors at stage 6 [002]. All programmes of study undergo a formal process of evaluation and must be approved by the Academic Council and Board of Directors prior to their introduction. The evaluation is intended to establish how academic and professional standards have been set; the appropriateness of these standards; and to promote confidence internally and externally in the standards and quality of the University's programmes.

50   Programme alignment with external reference points is considered at all stages and records of deliberations and outcomes can be found in the minutes of appropriate bodies, such as PASP [040]. University procedures for programme approval are managed by the Academic Quality Office and overseen by PASP, which monitors the process to ensure that it is consistently applied and that conditions have been fulfilled [040]. PASP receives recommendations for approval of new programmes from University Approval Panels (UAPs) which review proposed programmes to ensure that academic standards are set at the appropriate level [042]. Decisions and conditions relating to programmes under scrutiny are discussed prior to approval for progression to the Academic Council, which has ultimate responsibility for approving and re-approving programmes. A UAP report relating to an application to support validation of a suite of programmes and Academic Council minutes reviewed by the team indicated that the process is working effectively [042; 038].

51   Detailed and comprehensive programme proposal guidance and templates [034, 082] require applicants to state explicitly that programmes conform to University regulations (and, if not, that the derogations being sought are specified) [082]. They specifically require applicants to state that external reference points, for example national qualifications frameworks and professional bodies, have been drawn upon to inform the design of the programme and to indicate what external consultation has informed the appropriateness of a programme's standards [034].The team's review of a sample of programme proposals [055, 080] confirmed that the proposed programmes conform to the University's regulations. The team considered that the University has coherent and robust arrangements for programme

approval as templates and completed documentation demonstrate a systematic approach to programme design, development and approval [034, 055, 080] and external reviews [044] comprehensively cover areas relevant to setting and maintaining academic standards.

52   The GARs [001] make it clear that awards may only be made at levels consistent and fully in accordance with those set out in the FHEQ [001]. Learning outcomes must, at least, match relevant parts of the appropriate level descriptor and only when achievement of the relevant learning outcomes of the module and/or programme have been through appropriate assessment will the award be granted. The University policies and procedures relating to examination and assessment [002] set out comprehensive rules for the award of credit and qualifications, clearly stating that learning outcomes must correspond to relevant levels of the FHEQ. The ARA Committee is tasked with oversight of the award of credit and qualifications. It receives recommendations from School Boards of Examiners to consider and confirm results and recommend the conferment of awards as appropriate [039]. ARA minutes reviewed by the team confirm that specific discussion in relation to each award is thorough and detailed. To support University staff in developing appropriate and robust learning outcomes, the Learning and Teaching Team provides training and detailed guidance to ensure that programmes adhere to national qualification and credit frameworks, and University academic frameworks, regulations and procedures. This includes training on the development of learning outcomes [053] and guidance on ensuring that assessment instruments correspond to the correct level for the programme as outlined in the FHEQ. The team found that training material provided for staff included clear and useful guidance.

53   University procedures for annual programme monitoring cover a key set of requirements to facilitate effective programme review. The Protocol for the Production, Content and Scrutiny of Annual Programme Monitoring Reports [002 Part E] makes specific reference to the inclusion of academic standards within Annual Programme Monitoring Reports (APMRs) to 'establish whether there are convincing grounds for the programme meeting the academic standards claimed'. In addition, the views of students, PSRBs (where appropriate) [001, 002], and external examiners must be taken into account when reviewing programme performance [002 Part E]. The APMR template [035; 083] provides a well-structured vehicle for effective programme review, which requires programme teams to report updates on the previous year's actions; provide contextual data relating to student numbers and profiles; a review of student engagement; external examiner reports; employer and partner feedback; programme modifications; future developments and the current year's action plan. In the APMRs [083] reviewed by the team, actions with timelines were clearly identified and status updates were recorded, providing an effective vehicle for analysing and applying the feedback received. They also include action plans to ensure that programmes continue to maintain academic and professional standards. Students have a range of opportunities to provide feedback on their experience of a programme, including through SSLCs. Minutes of an LLM Law Conversion SSLC, November 2019 [078] reviewed by the team formally record student comments on matters including teaching, assessment, feedback, academic support, organisation, management, learning resources, university services and inclusion. Actions arising from such meetings feed into APMRs and are reported at School Education and Standards Boards [132]. The APMR Summary Report to Academic Council 2017-18 [032] draws together key common issues, key strengths and areas for improvement and include an action plan to address programme, School and University-wide issues. The team considered this report to be an effective means for capturing programme performance and supporting the maintenance of academic standards at an institutional level. It found that monitoring and review arrangements are robust and applied consistently in accordance with the University's academic framework.

54   The University actively and systematically engages with external and independent expertise to establish and maintain threshold standards that are comparable with other providers. The Annual Academic Quality Report [022] records that, in 2018-19, 13 external

members sat on UAPs, 28 carried out external reviews and 101 external examiners from 99 institutions (15 from practice and 84 from higher education institutions) were actively engaged with the University. External examiners are required to comment on whether the standards set for the programme(s)/modules that they are examining are consistent with the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements and/or those stated by the relevant PSRB [036, 043]. The University requires that programme teams review and analyse feedback from external examiners as part of the APMR approach [002]. The University's External Examiner Handbook states explicitly that external examiners must establish that the standards set are appropriate and that the standards of student achievements are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions [057]. The University's Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031] systematically and comprehensively covers key strengths and issues, with appropriate actions identified and ownership of actions recorded. A table in an annex to the report summarises clearly external examiners' responses to each area in the annual report form. The report captures external examiner recommendations and action points effectively, including their views on the administration of the process, standards, assessment, curriculum and development to assist the University in maintaining threshold standards and to ensure comparability with other providers.

Conclusions

55   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

56   The team found that the University has robust and coherent procedures for programme approval, monitoring and review which require that programmes align with external reference points, including the FHEQ and, where appropriate, PSRB requirements. The FHEQ and the Quality Code are used systematically as reference points to ensure that the University's higher education qualifications are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ and programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptors. The University's comprehensive and detailed regulations, associated policies and procedures are consistently applied to ensure that the award of credit and qualifications is awarded only where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment.

57   The University actively and systematically engages with external and independent expertise to enable it to be assured that the academic standards of its higher education provision are set and maintained at an appropriate level and are comparable with those of other UK degree awarding bodies. Annual programme monitoring reports, which include feedback from external examiners, students, employers and any partners involved, together with information about any modifications made to programmes, future developments and action plans, contribute to the production of an academic quality monitoring and evaluation report which is subject to senior and central-level oversight to enable the University to be assured that it meets the requirements for degree awarding powers and to identify any areas requiring further development. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Criterion B3 - Quality of the academic experience

58   This criterion states that:

B3.1   Organisations with degree awarding powers are expected to demonstrate that they are able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience to all students from all backgrounds, irrespective of their location, mode of study, academic subject, protected characteristics, previous educational background or nationality. Learning opportunities are consistently and rigorously quality assured.

59   The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence considered and why the team considered this evidence

60   The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in the *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance as follows.

Design and approval of programmes

a   To establish the effectiveness of the University's programme approval and design processes, how the coherence of new programmes is secured and how close links are maintained between learning support services and the University's programme planning and approval arrangements, the team considered the General Academic Regulations [001], the Manual of Policies and Procedures [002], Programme Approval templates [034], Academic Council and Education and Standards Committee minutes [038, 041], Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel minutes [040], Programme Approval Panel Reports [042], External Reviews of Programme Approval proposals [044] and programme approval documentation [055], and the BPP University Law School - Law training survey report [094].

b   To determine how relevant staff are informed of, and provided with guidance and support on, the programme, design development and approval procedures, the team reviewed the Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report [027], the Faculty induction material [063], Learning Outcomes Training material [053], Academic Promotions Criteria [059] and Law School New Programme Training [046].

c   To determine the involvement of external expertise in approving new programme proposals, the team considered Programme Approval External Reviews [044], Programme Approval Templates [034], the student written submission 2019-20 [013] the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy [016] and Programme Approval Reports [042].

Learning and teaching

d   To identify how the University articulates and implements a strategic approach to learning and teaching, consistent with its stated aims and objectives, the team reviewed the Academic Development Plan [014], the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy [016], the Career Ready Strategy [017] and the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Annual Report 2018-19 [028].

e   To determine how the University's strategic approach to learning and teaching informs developments within Schools, the team considered the Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement (SARA) Annual Report [030], the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], External Review of Programme Forms [044], new Law School Programmes Training Slides [046], programme approval documentation [055], the BPP University Law School - Law training survey report [094], the Law School Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy [095] and minutes of the SARA Committee [125].

f   To identify how the University maintains and critically evaluates physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, and to establish students' views of the learning environments and the virtual learning environment usage, the team considered the Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029] and the Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [030] which contains analysis of student surveys between 2017 and 2019.

g   To establish that the University has robust arrangements and support to ensure that learning opportunities provided to students, including those who are studying at a distance, are effective the team reviewed new Law School Programmes Training Slides [046], distance learning student feedback [102], evidence of distance learning programme monitoring [103] and examples of staff development for online teaching [104].

Assessment

h   To identify assessment processes used to enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved intended learning outcomes, and to establish how students are enabled to monitor their progress and further their academic development, the team reviewed the General Academic Regulations and Manual of Policies and Procedures [001, 002], the student written submission 2019-2020 [013], the Learning Teaching and Assessment Annual Report 2018-19 [028], the Annual Accredited Prior Learning Report 2017-18 [033], Standard Marking Criteria guidance [061], Assessment Marking Training [090], a team marking guide [106], examples of reasonable adjustments from the Inclusion and Learning Support Team and associated Reasonable Adjustments panel minutes [111] and an Accreditation of Prior Learning example [113].

i   To establish the extent to which staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made, the team considered programme approval reports [042], a tutorial for students on what examiners look for when marking examination scripts and how they distinguish between scripts [054] and programme approval documentation [055].

j   To confirm that students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice, and to establish the regulations, processes and monitoring the University has put in place to prevent, identify, investigate and respond to unacceptable academic practice, the team considered the General Academic Regulations [001] and Manual of Policies and Procedures [002], the student written submissions 2018-19 and 2019-20 [012, 013], the Office of Regulation and Compliance Annual Report 2018-19 [024] and Guidance for Invigilators [062].

External examining

k   To establish the University's use and monitoring of external examiners, including in the moderation of assessment tasks and student assessed work, the team considered the General Academic Regulations [001], the Manual of Policies and Procedures 2019-20 [002], the Annual Academic Quality Monitoring Evaluation Report 2018-19 [023], the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], Annual External Examiner Report Template [036], two completed external examiner report examples [043, 086], the External Examiner Handbook [057], and an indicative schedule of work for external examiners [091].

l   To establish the nature of the consideration given to the comments and recommendations contained in external examiners' reports and responses made to these, the team considered the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], an Annual Programme Review Form [035] and Academic Council minutes [038], Annual Programme Monitoring Reports [083] and programme management committee minutes from each School [084].

Academic appeals and student complaints

m   To identify the University's regulations and procedures for handling and monitoring academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of the student experience, the team considered the Manual of Policies and Procedures [002], General Academic Regulations [001] and the Office of Regulations and Compliance Annual Report [024].

n   To establish that appropriate action is taken following an appeal or complaint, the team considered the Office of Regulations and Compliance Annual Report [024], the outcomes of formal complaints [108] and examples of academic appeal outcomes [109].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

61   The team requested and reviewed a random sample of the following: four annual programme monitoring reports and programme committee minutes (one from each School) [083, 084] to confirm that programme committees give full and serious consideration to external examiners' comments and recommendations; assessed work, including the assessment brief, marked scripts and markers' guide (two from each School) [085] to confirm that marking is conducted in accordance with the University's procedures and to ensure consistency of practice across the University; and eight formal complaint outcomes from across the Schools [108] and two academic appeal outcomes from three of the four Schools (as the School of Nursing is new, none were available for review from the School) [109] to confirm that the University takes appropriate action on receipt of a complaint or appeal.

What the evidence shows

62   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

Design and approval of programmes

63   The programme approval template [034] requires programme developers to indicate the rationale for the way a programme has been designed and how it aligns with the University's Mission Statement, Strategic Plan and Academic Development Plan. In developing new provision, a Programme Development Team (PDT) approach is adopted [000]. The PDT presents a new course proposal to a School Review Board for internal

scrutiny after external consultation. When developing the Solicitors Qualifying Examination LLM Legal Practice (Solicitors) and LLM Legal Practice (Bar) programmes, for example, the University took account of a training survey of 59 law firms and 1,300 students [094] to ensure that the programme is fit for purpose. At institutional level, a University Approval Panel (UAP), chaired by a member of the Academic Council, with students and two external experts for independent scrutiny, considers the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities to determine whether to approve, approve with conditions or reject the proposal. The Academic Council [038] and the Education and Standards Committee [041] maintain strategic oversight and ensure sufficient resources are available. Programme approval documentation seen by the team [034, 055] demonstrates that the University operates effective processes for the design and approval of programmes, underpinned by internal and external scrutiny [044] together with appropriate institutional oversight. The team considered that the University's thorough and comprehensive regulations and procedures [001,002] enable it to consider carefully programme purposes and objectives which, as indicated in B2, demonstrates a systematic approach to programme design, development and approval.

64   Relevant staff are informed of, and provided with guidance and support on, these procedures and their roles and responsibilities in relation to them. The University does this by providing comprehensive guidance on the design, development and approval of programmes [082] as well as encouraging staff participation in activities such as external examining in order to gain insights across the sector [027]. There is evidence of thorough induction for new teaching staff [063], encouragement to attain Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy and completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching [059] to support and develop staff in their academic practice. The University provides specific training, such as developing learning outcomes for a new programme [053], to enable staff to fulfil their role effectively in programme design and development. A Head of Law School Training and Development was appointed to support and guide staff in programme re-design and development as the Law programme portfolio was re-designed to reflect external changes taking place in the profession [046].The Learning and Teaching Unit's annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness report [027], which is considered by the Academic Council, monitors the guidance and support provided to staff engaged in curriculum development with performance measured against internal benchmarks (targets) and an action plan.

65   Responsibility for approving new programme proposals is clearly assigned. Specific committees at School, University and Board level are identified by the University's regulations as having responsibility for approving new programme proposals [001]. The programme approval documentation [034, 055] demonstrates that the academic programme and the business case are separate. The final decision to approve a programme is informed by evidence from the business case; however, the reporting structures of the academic committees ensure that the academic merits are considered independently [001, 002]. There is extensive involvement of external expertise in the design and development of programmes to ensure an employer-informed curriculum [016]. External experts report [044] on learning outcomes, the syllabus, and schemes of work, reading lists, assessment and proposed resources. Programme re-approvals are accompanied by reports from external examiners and PSRBs [034] and, as indicated above, there is also external input on the UAP through the independent Chair, two external academic members and student representation [013]. Further externality is ensured through joint validation events with professional bodies, for example, the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult/Child/Mental Health) joint NMC UAP Report involving members of the University and the NMC on one panel [042]. Subsequent action following programme approval is appropriate and carefully monitored for consistency of operation to ensure that any conditions have been fulfilled, and to establish that the University's intentions are, in practice, being met [040]. This is consistently achieved as the Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel [001] (chaired by an independent member of the

Academic Council appointed by the independent Chair of the Academic Council and including the Chairs of UAPs, the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of Academic Quality), oversees these processes which are managed by the Academic Quality Office.

66   The MoPPs [002] and programme approval reports seen by the team [042] demonstrate that the coherence of new programmes is secured through the programme approval process, which shows how each stage enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, and considers student workload, volume and nature of assessment, progression through the programme, and increasing intellectual demand of each level's learning outcomes [002, 042]. Programme approval templates [034] and programme approval documentation [055] considered by the team confirm that the approval process ensures that assessment methods are aligned with programme content, learning outcomes and learning and teaching activities. Modules are assigned as compulsory or elective and learning outcome mapping demonstrates that different combinations or alternative pathways are coherent and map to the learning outcomes of awards as shown in the new programme proposals.

67   Close links are maintained between learning support services and the University's programme planning and approval arrangements. This is because library, IT and learning support resources, together with the planned demand on student support services, have to be incorporated into new programme development and considered in the proposal [055]. All programme development teams submit Equality Impact Assessments with sections on resources and any reasonable adjustments required so that the learning opportunities are accessible to all students [002]. Moreover, a member of the Education Services team (which houses the learning support service) sits on the School Review Board [042] to facilitate Education Services participation in programme development and associated processes. A member of the professional services staff also serves on the Academic Council [038], and its minutes demonstrate that this enables learning support resource requirements to be taken into account in final programme approval [038].

Learning and teaching

68   The University's strategic approach to learning and teaching is consistent with its stated academic objective. The University's stated mission and academic objective is to build careers through education [014]. This strategic approach is clearly articulated in the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) [016] which is overseen by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education Services) who sits on the senior academic governance committee, thereby ensuring appropriate oversight. It is also reiterated in specific School Learning and Teaching Strategies. The Academic Development Plan (2019-2022) [014] is underpinned by the Scholarship Strategy 2019-2022 [015], the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2019-2022 [016] and the Career Ready Strategy 2019-2022 [017]. Through the latter [017], the University articulates its approach to learning and teaching which is to emphasise the skills, attributes and behaviours and the academic and graduate outcomes required of students for the professional workplace. Employability is embedded in the curriculum [055] with extensive external contributions being made to programme design, development and approval [044]. The MoPPs [002] include the University's Equality and Diversity Policy which indicates that subject and curriculum development will take account of the diversity of the student body, supported by staff development needs, arising through appraisal and peer observations. The Policy also refers to reasonable adjustments being made to assessment methods to meet the needs of disabled students and those from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

69   The School-level learning and teaching strategies and their operational plans align with the University LTAS which ensures consistency in the stated objectives [095, 028]. Teaching is career guided and supported by the involvement of employers and professional

bodies, for example, through question and answer sessions between students and local barristers [031]. In the student written submissions [012, 013] students judge teaching to be excellent and they appreciate the professional staff, stating that they provide a great source of inspiration and practical advice on contemporary working practice. There are consistently positive external examiner comments about the quality and employment focus of the learning and teaching. The Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031] notes that 35 per cent of external examiners identify 'The innovative, progressive programmes, the quality and practical relevance of the learning materials and the imaginative, practice-focussed assessment instruments, across all Schools' as a key strength.

70   Further confirmation of how the University implements its strategic approach to learning and teaching, consistent with its stated academic objectives, is shown by the way in which teaching methods and learning tasks emphasise employment practices. These include work-based or case studies combining academic and vocational skills [044]. PSRB-accredited programmes include the Legal Practice Course (for solicitors) which is accredited by the Solicitors Regulation Authority; the Bar Professional Training Course by the Bar Standards Board; accountancy programmes by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants or the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales; chiropractic programmes by the General Chiropractic Council; and psychology programmes by the British Psychological Society. The student written submission 2019-20 [013] confirms that skills gained from the courses equip students to move forward to their professional lives with a skillset that would assist them to contribute positively towards any organisation.

71   The University maintains physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for every student. The team's review of the Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report [029] illustrates that the University critically evaluates the ongoing safety, accessibility and reliability of spaces by internal benchmarking/ targets. Access to buildings is controlled, and security and business continuity plans are in place. First aiders and fire marshals are available at all sites in case of an emergency. 11 of the University's buildings have dedicated rooms for prayer or private reflection, all of which also have specific facilities to support religious needs. The University has recently supported the training of 18 members of staff as mental health first aiders. Student representatives were also invited to this training and five student representatives have also been trained as mental health first aiders [012]. The Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029] considered by the Academic Council indicates general student satisfaction with teaching and study spaces and resources available to them. The report also indicates that the University's virtual learning environment (VLE) currently operates at 99 per cent 'uptime' ensuring that face-to-face, blended and online students have access to the materials they need, when they need them. The University Equality and Diversity Policy [001] demonstrates the University's commitment to supporting all students, including those with a disability or learning need. The physical, virtual and social learning environments are monitored annually for their safety, accessibility and reliability by the Educational Services department and approved by the Education and Standards Committee [041] for action. Examples of actions include a further audit of the VLE to ensure that content is accessible and increased social learning space accessibility from 85 per cent to 90 per cent.

72   The University's systematic monitoring and review procedures outlined in the MoPPs [002] provide robust arrangements to ensure that learning opportunities are effective to those of its students that may be studying at a distance. The GARs set out the University's approach that all programmes, regardless of mode or delivery, are regulated, monitored and reviewed by the same procedures [001]. The Annual Programme Monitoring reports (APMRs) [083, 103] and the APMR Summary report [032] confirm that the procedures are applied consistently to all programmes, regardless of mode. The APMRs draw on a multitude of evidence sources, including module reviews, external examiners' reports, PSRB reports, student feedback, contextual data which compare distance-learning students'

achievements with those of campus-based students, and an action plan developed by the programme team. Student data are disaggregated to identify any differential impact on particular groups of students. Each School has regular standardisation meetings to ensure equity of experience for programmes that are delivered at different locations and by different modes. The student written submission confirms that programmes delivered at a distance have the same active student representation system as for those studying at the University [012].

73   The primary vehicle for delivery of the programmes, whether on campus or at a distance, is the VLE which is widely accessible. The VLE includes a comprehensive selection of materials, assessments and programme information for all students and presentations such as webinars and pre-recorded lectures [100]. These are available to students on all programmes, irrespective of the delivery mode. This is confirmed by the annual student written submissions which included contributions from campus-based and distance learning students [012,013]. The Law School recently introduced the Virtual Practice Environment supported by adaptive learning which will benefit both face-to-face and distance learning students [046]. These methods of learning and teaching are monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are fulfilling students' needs [103].

74   The University critically evaluates student services annually [029] to ensure its environment and support for all modes of study are effective and monitored. All student services (careers, library, and programme support) are contactable online to meet the needs of students studying at different campuses or at a distance. The library has a digital first policy, which provides as many resources as possible online at the point of need [123]. The e-core text system and online reading lists systems are integrated with the VLE to ensure ease of access to core reading materials and centralised planning of library resource provision ensures students have an equal opportunity to access library resources [029]. The online and peer observation process (which is linked to the UK Professional Standards Framework) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching are vehicles for ensuring that the quality of teaching delivered to students that may be studying at a distance is effective. The Learning and Teaching team prepares staff for this mode of delivery through the provision of technical training as well as mandatory online learning skills sessions [115].

75   Student progression, retention and achievement is monitored by the SARA Committee which is also responsible for monitoring consistency and disseminating good practice to achieve positive outcomes for all. In response to the Department for Education's notice to the University regarding concerns about non-continuation rates for domestic, full-time first-year students [125], the University has taken action to improve non-continuation. The SARA Annual Report 2018-19 [030] indicates that a specific non-continuation, retention and achievement project, led by the Deputy Dean (Education Services) and the Head of Student Experience, has led to improvements. These include more timely and focused continuation and achievement data, a review of admissions/at risk criteria to better identify and support students on entry, bespoke VLE training, a combined induction guide and student handbook and a new exit interview form providing the SARA Committee with enhanced information on withdrawals [030]. The team considers that the closer monitoring of student performance resulting from these improvements should contribute to the early identification of students who may be at risk of non-continuation and consideration of support that might be put in place to enable students to continue their studies.

76   Every student is able to monitor their progress and further academic development in a structured, accessible, concise and timely way. They can do this through a variety of mechanisms such as the Programme Handbook, a Personal Development Plan (mentioned in the context of the LLM Law and Legal Practice) [044] and feedback from both formative and summative assessment available on the VLE. Standardised Programme Handbooks contain credit values, learning hours and learning outcomes [055] and the modules contain

the details and mode of assessment [034] to enable students to understand what is expected.

77   Students can monitor their progress, discuss specific issues about their learning objectives and make appropriate choices with their personal tutor. Induction materials [127] reviewed by the team confirm that students are informed how to use their personal tutor at induction and by information in the Student Handbook [005]. Staff are supported in this role by induction and development sessions [063], the Personal Tutor Policy [002] and a Personal Tutor Handbook [105] which detail expectations for supporting student academic development. Students and tutors can monitor academic progress and see dashboard data on a personalised adaptive platform [046].

78   The Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report [029] indicates that the University's learning spaces are accessible to people with physical disabilities [029] and lecture theatres have hearing loops. In addition, the report states that learning materials are provided in alternative formats for students with visual impairments and induction sessions are recorded for later review. The student written submission 2019-20 [013] notes 'the tailored provision provided by all teams in order to allow students to excel and achieve "positive outcomes for all" which is highlighted as an area of good practice' [013].

Assessment

79   The University ensures valid and reliable processes of assessment by having a single set of clear regulations, policies and procedures [001, 002]. These describe the assessment framework which covers all programmes. Examples of validation documentation and minutes confirm that assessment methods are scrutinised at programme approval to ensure they can lead to a judgement on the specific learning outcomes [042, 055]. Each specific assessment instrument is approved by the external examiner prior to use [031] and compliance with this is confirmed through the annual summary report on external examining [031]. The programme team develops a marking guide [106] in accordance with the University's Standard Marking Criteria [061] which serve to develop a shared understanding between markers and to facilitate differentiation between students' levels of performance with an approach that enables comparability across modules.

80   The team's scrutiny of the sample of assessed examinations, essays, reports, group work, presentations and case studies from each of the University's schools [085] indicates that marking, internal standardisation and moderation are consistently operated in accordance with the University examination and assessment procedures [002]. All these assessments provide explicit and unambiguous staff marking guidance notes and a detailed marking scheme related to the grading criteria and threshold standards [085]. Students benefit from explicit feedback and feed forward comments reflecting the learning outcomes, which are constructive and developmental. There is evidence of first and second marking and internal moderation to give assurance that the assessment criteria are applied appropriately and equitably [085].

81   The University enables all students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought. The University's Equality and Diversity Policy [002] refers to reasonable adjustments being made to assessment methods to meet the needs of disabled students and those from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Students with specific learning needs can apply to the Inclusion and Learning Support Team for reasonable adjustments to be made so that they are not disadvantaged in achieving the intended learning outcomes. Learning support agreements, medical assessments and minutes of the Reasonable Adjustments Panel [111] demonstrate that the University takes into account the needs of individual students who have differing requirements by offering alternative arrangements to the assessment procedure.

The Reasonable Adjustments Panel chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, confirms alternative forms of assessment or other substantial changes for these students which include course material made available in advance if not on the VLE, the use of computers, extra time or a separate room available for examinations and alternative assessment modes [111].

82   The University has explicit regulations [001, 002] for students who feel their performance in an assessment has been impacted by an unforeseen event. Before examinations, students declare that they are 'fit to sit' and if they then attend the assessment they may not later submit a mitigating circumstances or appeal application relating to impaired performance in that assessment because of illness. This is made clear on the examination rubric [085]. Students can make a mitigating circumstances application via an online portal for the Office of Regulation and Compliance [110] to grant them a concession to allow the assessment to be void. All concessions are reported to the appropriate Board of Examiners and the process is monitored and reviewed by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel [056] to ensure the fair and consistent application of the regulations. The University applies the assessment regulations fairly as shown by the panel minutes and external examiner comments that applications had been dealt with thoroughly and decisions had been consistent [110].

83   The University's accreditation of prior learning (APL) regulations, policies and procedures [001, 002] describe the framework and principles on which prior learning will be accredited and confirm that all APL cases must be reported to the Board of Examiners. The limits on the awards of credit are clearly stated. The minimum exemption for APL is one module of 10 credit points; and the maximum is two thirds of a programme, although no APL can be granted for the final third of any award in order that the standards of the award are not compromised. The team considered examples of APL and determined that practices are conducted fairly and according to the regulations [113] and enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

84   Staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made. In order to help students to understand the process of assessment and the expected standards, there are revision sessions, where marking criteria are specifically discussed [054]; marking criteria and assessment methodology are published in programme handbooks [055]; and students receive formative and summative assessments, including mock examination practice and feedback [013, 085, 107]. Feedback and results from formative and summative assessments are available on the VLE [085]. Feedback timeframes are clearly outlined in the academic regulations, policies and procedures [001, 002] with formative written feedback to be given within four weeks. The team noted that the student written submission 2018-19 [012] indicated that there was consistency in turnaround times for receiving feedback on their work. However, students also recommended that the University ensure feedback from mock examinations is effective, timely, consistent and given in a timeframe that enables students to make the most of the feedback provided to them in preparing for formal examinations [013]. The University has taken action to address this recommendation (see section E).

85   To promote an understanding of the necessary skills to demonstrate good academic practice, the library arranges timetabled drop-in sessions and one-to-one bookable sessions for academic support and development [005]. This includes academic writing support and training on the effective use of library resources for study and research [005] and programme-specific training such as professional research skills for Legal Practice Course students and research training skills for Graduate Diploma in Law students when undertaking the Independent Research Essay [000]. In addition, referencing guides are provided for students on the VLE. The Inclusion and Learning Support team runs academic support sessions on a one-to-one basis for students with learning support needs. The

English language support team also runs pre-sessional and in-sessional courses to give students practice in developing their academic skills and to be aware of what 'good academic practice' means. Opportunities for students to develop the skills to demonstrate good academic practice is evident in module content, for example, an objective of a criminal law module [054] is to introduce students to features examiners are looking for when marking their examination scripts. The pro bono team also provides students with opportunities to be involved in volunteering and corporate social responsibility initiatives, reinforcing the requirement for, and importance of, key academic skills, including attention to detail, accuracy and commitment, consistent with and clearly articulated in, the Career Ready Strategy [017].

86   The University operates effective processes with comprehensive definitions for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to academic malpractice, comprising poor academic practice and academic misconduct [001, 002]. The GARs [001] define poor academic practice as 'an inept or inadvertent breach' of academic conventions through ignorance with no distinguishable advantage. In order to identify poor academic practice, students are required to submit summative written assessments through plagiarism-detection software which provides them with an opportunity to check for unacceptable academic practice before final submission of their work for assessment. Academic misconduct is defined as any act or attempted act to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment through plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, impersonation, contract cheating, false attribution, misrepresentation, unauthorised possession in an examination or bribery. Responsibility for dealing with poor academic practice resides with the relevant School. The University's Academic Malpractice Procedures [002] require suspected academic malpractice to be reported to School Academic Malpractice Decision Makers, nominated by the Deans of School, to determine the nature of the malpractice and action required. In the case of poor academic practice, a student may receive a formal caution, where there is no previous record of academic malpractice. The School may reduce the assessment mark awarded to the student who will also be subject to academic development on good academic practice. Where a student has previously been found to have engaged in academic malpractice or the matter is a sufficiently serious first offence, a case may be referred to the Office of Regulation and Compliance for an academic misconduct hearing. Where academic misconduct is found by the Academic Misconduct Panel [112] a penalty is imposed, reflecting the degree of intention, other factors causing an action to be considered to be more serious and mitigating factors. Penalties may range from a deduction of marks to termination of a student's registration. Academic misconduct cases are managed by the Office of Regulation and Compliance and reported to the Academic Council annually [024] to ensure transparency and consistency of treatment to students. The Academic Malpractice Procedures also apply to students sitting examinations supervised by trained invigilators [062] who are subject to the rules for the invigilation of examinations [002] which indicate action to be taken by the Chief Invigilator in the event of suspected of academic malpractice.

87   The Manual of Policies and Procedures [002] specifies the length of an assessment instrument as determined by the module credit weighting, the number of assessments per module, the method of standardising completed scripts and first marking principles. Before external examiner scrutiny, the marked scripts are all second marked or a sample moderated according to the number of students to ensure the first marker has correctly applied the mark scheme. The moderation process is very clearly illustrated by a chart and checklist [002]. Processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated, and 81 per cent of external examiners highlighted 'The quality of the assessment setting, marking and moderation processes' as a key strength in the Annual External Examiner Summary Report [031]. However, other comments made by external examiners suggest the need for further attention to ensure greater consistency of approach and adherence to the University's protocols relating to assessment setting, marking and moderation across the range of the University's provision. Actions taken by the University in

response to comments made by external examiners include further training provided by the University's Education Services Team and the provision of online information on the VLE for staff involved in assessing students and in assessment design.

88   The University consistently operates its processes of marking and moderating assessments, which is confirmed by the Annual External Examiner Summary Report [031]. In addition, the team scrutinised a random sample of marked work for each School's final assessments in 2019 together with the brief, marked script and markers' guide and found that the processes for marking assessments and moderating marks are consistently operated in the sample provided [085, 091]. The assessment processes are clearly articulated to students in programme and module handbooks, the VLE and on the University website. Internal student module surveys show the majority of students tend to agree that the criteria used in marking for a module have been clear in advance [102]. The assessment processes are articulated to staff mainly through very comprehensive and well attended staff development sessions [115]. The content includes topics such as learning outcomes planning and drafting assessments [053], feedback to students, formative assessment, marker training, the moderation process, marking criteria and the application of generic marking criteria. The VLE contains a variety of training modes to support these sessions, including webinars and video presentations.

External examining

89   The University makes scrupulous use of external examiners, including in the moderation of assessment tasks and student assessed work. The University's approach to external examining is governed by detailed policies and regulations relating to external examiner nomination, formal appointment and induction [001, 002]. An external examiner is nominated [089] by a programme leader who is well positioned to verify appropriate subject knowledge and is scrutinised by the Education and Standards Committee [041] to check they are suitably independent, qualified and experienced prior to formal approval by the Academic Council [038]. These layers of scrutiny allow for thorough checks to be made about the suitability of the appointments proposed and their alignment with the University's requirements.

90   The University prepares new external examiners well to fulfil their role effectively. The Dean of Academic Quality conducts an induction and they are given a comprehensive External Examiner Handbook [057] describing University procedures, including dealing with appeals and academic misconduct, the role of external examiners, their annual report, the operation of boards of examiners as well as specific information about assessment, grading, and the processes for classification of awards.

91   External examiners scrutinise and approve all summative assessment instruments, including coursework assessments and takeaway assignments [001]. When external examiners have identified issues, for example, relating to a lack of adherence to the University's protocols on assessment setting or the process of assessment drafting for new staff, in particular, not always being consistent and transparent [031], the University has taken immediate action and developed specific staff development programmes such as assessment marking training [090]. In order that the external examiner has sufficient evidence on which to come to a judgement about the University's classification standards, the GARs [001] describe a formula to determine the number and range of students' assessed work to be sent to an external examiner. Overall, this approach offers assurance regarding the integrity of the external examiner procedure, gives confidence in the accuracy of awards and demonstrates how the University makes scrupulous use of external examiners in the moderation of student assessed work.

92   The University gives full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in external examiners' reports and provides external examiners with a considered and timely response to their comments and reports. External examiners' reports [036, 043] are formally received by the Vice-Chancellor. Reports are scrutinised by the Education and Standards Committee [041], which ensures actions have been assigned and discharged, and the Academic Council [038] receives an Annual External Examiner Summary Report [031] containing a summary of good practice and areas for improvement raised by external examiners with a corresponding action plan. This summary includes further details of each named external examiner with their module responsibilities, any salient points they make and actions taken so that the University can establish that its intentions are, in practice, being met. The Annual Academic Quality Monitoring Evaluation Report [023] considered by the Academic Council indicates that the University had received 91 per cent of external examiner reports. The University investigated each external examiner report that was not submitted and either action was taken or there was a valid explanation. At programme level, external examiner feedback is reviewed and addressed through the APMR process [083] and considered by programme management committees [084] which decide on action plans. External examiners receive considered and timely responses from programme leaders and receive a copy of the APMR [083]. Examples of APMRs reviewed by the team indicated how external examiner comments are being addressed.

Academic appeals and student complaints

93   The University's formal Academic Appeals Policy and the Student Complaints Policy are accessible to all students and clearly described on the VLE and in the Student Handbook [005]. The policies and regulations are also available on the public-facing website [bppassets.s3-eu-west- amazonaws.com/public/ assets/pdf /brochures/academic/]. Each stage of the Academic Appeals Policy and the Student Complaints Policy are time-bound and the University's Office of Regulations and Compliance (ORC) reports [024] that 98 per cent of complaints and appeals are resolved within the time frames stipulated in the regulations and procedures [001, 002]. The University has effective procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of the academic experience; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely.

94   The University encourages students to resolve complaints informally in the first instance with the Student Advice and Guidance Team or an academic staff member. If the matter is not resolved to a student's satisfaction, a formal complaint can be lodged for investigation by the ORC to ensure fairness and independence from the academic schools/ departments. A student who considers that a formal complaint has not been properly investigated may appeal to the Vice-Chancellor. If a student has exhausted the University's internal procedures and remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the student may refer the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) [002].

95   The University's Student Appeals Policy [002] defines grounds for appeal against academic results but clearly states that appeals cannot be made against an academic judgement or a result confirmed by the Academic Council. To ensure fairness, no member of the Academic Appeals Board can have been a member of the Board whose decision the appeal is against and, to ensure fairness to all students, the appeals are considered anonymously. At all times during a complaint or appeal process a student may obtain support, representation and advice from the BPP University Students' Association [013] as confirmed by the BPP University Students' Association Statement [065].

96   The ORC produces an annual report [024] for the Academic Council [038] to identify any University-wide trends in student appeals or complaints and to enable actions to enhance the quality of the student experience. For example, the majority of appeals received by the University related to mitigating circumstances for assessment and the University has

revised the Mitigating Circumstances Panel Terms of Reference to improve standardisation and now enables students to submit an application via an online portal for their mitigating circumstances to be considered [038]. This makes the information clearer to students as the online portal contains guidance concerning permissible appeals, the grounds for appeal and the supporting evidence required [024].

97   The team scrutinised eight complaints [108] and two academic appeals [109] randomly sampled from the 2018-19 academic year and found that these complaints were scrupulously dealt with in a fair, appropriate and timely manner, aligning with University procedures [108]. Four of the complaints were upheld, three were rejected and one was partly upheld. The complaints were mainly about non-completion or interruption of studies and the return of fees. However, one raised a point of principle which was referred to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel [110]. When students had exhausted the internal procedures, completion of procedure letters had been issued which contained details for any further review by the OIA. In 2018-19 67 complaints or appeal were referred to the OIA but only one was upheld, indicating the effectiveness of the University's policies and procedures.

Conclusions

98   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

99   The University demonstrates that it designs and delivers programmes and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience. It does this by operating effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes which is informed by external stakeholder feedback and student engagement to ensure that academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities provided for students are consistently and rigorously quality assured. Programme coherence is underpinned by mapping learning outcomes of modules and School and University-level consideration. Oversight of new programmes ensures that these align with the University's mission, have appropriate learning outcomes and assessment approaches to develop an increasing level of intellectual demand in students and that students have sufficient support and resources to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes. The University also provides comprehensive guidance for staff on programme design, development and approval to ensure a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to programme design and approval. The responsibility for approving new programme proposals is clearly assigned and subsequent action is carefully monitored to ensure that programmes are meeting their stated objectives and that learning opportunities are consistently and rigorously quality assured.

100   The University clearly articulates and implements a strategic approach to learning and teaching which is consistent with its stated academic objective to build careers through education and this approach is reflected in School-level learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Teaching is career-guided and informed by employer and other stakeholder engagement to ensure that it is professionally relevant. External examiners comment positively on the quality and employment focus of the learning and teaching and students also appreciate the professional expertise that staff contribute, the quality and relevance of the learning materials and practice-focused nature of assessments. The University monitors the learning environment and support it provides for students on an annual basis to ensure that these are fit for purpose, effective and that all its students, including those studying at a distance, are enabled to progress and further their academic development. The University operates valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought. Staff and students are able to engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which

academic judgements are made. Students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice and the University has established effective processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice.

101   The University's processes for the nomination, appointment and induction of external examiners is clear and it makes scrupulous use of external examiners, including in the moderation of assessment tasks and student assessed work. It gives full and serious consideration to, and provides considered and timely responses to, external examiners' comments and recommendations. The University has taken action to address areas for development identified by external examiners. Annual external summary reports include good practice and areas for improvement identified by external examiners, and a corresponding action plan are considered by the Academic Council. These demonstrate that academic standards are being met and are comparable with other UK higher education providers. There are effective and readily accessible policies and procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of the academic experience and students may obtain support, representation and advice from the Students' Association at any stage in the process. The policies and procedures are fair, accessible and timely, enabling enhancement and appropriate action to be taken following an appeal or complaint. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Criterion C: Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff

Criterion C1 - the role of academic and professional staff

102   This criterion states that:

C1.1   *An organisation granted powers to award degrees assures itself that it has appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students. Everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, is appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the level(s) and subject(s) of the qualifications being awarded.*

103   The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence considered and why the team considered this evidence

104   The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance as follows.

a   To understand the University's approach to ensuring that staff involved in learning, teaching and assessment have relevant and appropriate academic and professional expertise; to establish how it assures itself and monitors that all staff involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, have such expertise; and to obtain an external perspective, the team reviewed the Scholarship Strategy [015], Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy [016], the Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report 2018-19 [027], BPS Accreditation Visit Report 2017 [052], Academic Council minutes [038], staff CVs [087] and the Annual Faculty and Scholarship Census [114]. These documents were also considered to review progress against actions, for instance in relation to the number of staff participating in the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching (PGCLT) and engaging with Higher Education Academy Fellowship scheme.

b   To determine how the University identifies and supports staff training and development needs, reflection and evaluation of staff learning, teaching and assessment practices and staff research and scholarly activity, the team reviewed the Scholarship Strategy [015], the Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report [027], a Performance and Career Development Record template [058], details of staff development events [115], a record of staff external publications from September 2016 to the present [116] and observation review reports [117], and details of a recent Performance and Career Development University Networking Event [118].

c   To establish the means by which the University seeks to ensure that staff understand its requirements relating to assessment feedback and have expertise in providing feedback on assessment which is timely, constructive and developmental, the team reviewed the Manual of Policies and Procedures [002] and guidance issued by the University on giving feedback for learning [120].

d   The team considered programme approval documentation [055], Faculty induction materials [063] and information on workload modelling [119] in order to establish the University's staff recruitment, induction and promotions practices and how it reflects on staff/student ratios, staff involvement in curriculum development and design and their understanding of institutional requirements in relation to assessment feedback, scholarship and approaches to teaching and learning.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

105   The team requested and considered a random and representative sample of eight CVs, comprising four full-time and four freelance teaching staff from across the four Schools to identify the adherence to University processes and the relevance and appropriateness of the experience staff bring to programme delivery [087].

What the evidence shows

106   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

107   The University states that its specialist contribution to the higher education landscape is 'to deliver academically rigorous professional education grounded in the practical professional application of knowledge and skills, and its learning, teaching, assessment and scholarship is informed by the needs of professional practice' [000]. The University has approximately 800 permanent/fixed-term faculty and freelance staff. The University's Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report [027], informed by the Annual Faculty and Scholarship Census [114], provides the University with a comprehensive overview of staff qualifications, scholarship and continuing professional development. The report indicates that the number of eligible census participants (permanent and fixed-term staff) was 351 and 343 submissions were received from across the Schools and services.

108   The Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report [027] is constructed with clear reference to internal University benchmarks and indicates that, in 2018-19, 100 per cent of permanent/fixed-term staff held academic qualifications, professional qualifications and/or professional body membership related to their discipline and 96 per cent had demonstrated active engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline knowledge. 99 per cent (above the internal benchmark target of 95 per cent) of permanent/fixed-term staff were scholarly active and 51 per cent held HEA Fellowship and/or a tertiary teaching qualification (including those currently studying). It identifies the percentage of staff engaged in activity with other higher education providers, such as external examiners, and teaching observation rates (81 per cent in 2018-19). The report also highlights areas where the University exceeds its own benchmarks, for instance, the number of staff participating in curriculum development and/or assessment design (95 per cent against an internal benchmark of 85 per cent in 2018-19). The report includes an Areas of Concern and Improvement Action Plan which indicates that 85 (49 per cent) of participants without a tertiary teaching qualification intend to enrol on the PGCLT by September 2020. The Enhanced Action Plan included in the report links to the new Scholarship Strategy 2019-2022 [015] demonstrating that monitoring and review arrangements inform strategic planning. For example, additional staff resource has been introduced in the Learning and Teaching team to support staff with HEA Fellowship applications and progression. Academic Council minutes [038] provide clear evidence that the University assures itself that all staff involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, have relevant academic and professional expertise.

109   The Scholarship Strategy [015], which is overseen by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, drives the University's approach to staff development and focuses on enhanced learning,

nurturing a culture of scholarship and having an impact beyond the classroom. Scholarship is defined as 'the application of the most current knowledge of a discipline or professional specialism to broader activities and practice, communicated in ways which are validated by peers and influence others beyond the institution.' The strategy is informed by Boyer's work (1990) which identifies four categories of scholarship, namely discovery; integration; application; and teaching and learning. The Strategy relates to the Academic Development Plan's Principle 3: Academic Community Development [014] and its own three principles (enhanced learning; culture; and impact beyond the classroom) commit the University to ensuring that staff are actively engaged in scholarship that underpins their teaching, that scholarly activity is recognised and valued and staff are supported in their scholarship, and that such activity makes a difference in local, regional, national and international contexts.

110   The Scholarship Strategy is aligned with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2019-2022 [016] which reflects the importance of scholarship in underpinning the six principles (Section A refers) identified in the Strategy. The Strategy [016] indicates that staff have access to qualifications and development opportunities that underpin high quality teaching and scholarship, are relevant to their disciplines, and that staff appraisal and development processes support and identify career aspirations and development needs. The team noted the University's evident commitment to scholarship linked to teaching, learning and assessment as indicated in a British Psychological Society Accreditation Visit Report 2017 [052] which commends the senior management team's support for staff to gain a research profile, reflected in a research budget for staff to undertake their own psychological research 'which has informed the teaching of the programme and allowed opportunities for students to take part in internships'.

111   The Performance and Career Development (PCD) process is the key mechanism for identifying and supporting staff development needs [058]. The University is committed, through the Scholarship Strategy [015], to ensuring that staff have 'professional development opportunities that include scholarly activity linked to the annual PCD process and promotion.' The University reports that, currently, 82 per cent of University staff are engaged with the new PCD process [000]. The PCD template [058] is appropriately structured and the PCD process clearly links reflection and evaluation on staff learning, teaching and assessment practice to development opportunities provided by the University. This is evident at the individual level where completed templates demonstrate that line managers and their reports discuss suitable training related to the development of new programmes, for example, and also at an aggregate level through thematic analysis of the process leading to the organisation of a two-day networking session for staff [118]. The University's observation process is the key institutional tool for supporting staff in the reflection and evaluation of their learning, teaching and assessment practices. In 2018-19, a total of 81 per cent of staff in a faculty role (against an internal benchmark of 90 per cent) were observed with 75 per cent having acted as an observer [027]. The University has identified actions taken in response, including a review of the University Observation policy by the Academic Quality Office and Education Services and nominated leads in each School/Unit to be responsible for ensuring that observations are completed, recorded, action plans and impact noted, and shared with the Academic Quality Office. The University requires each School to provide an overview report on teaching observations. These summaries vary in style but typically include comments on overall quality, emerging issues and the use of technology, visual aids and other learning materials. They also identify common themes and exceptional issues in need of attention and actions that are time-bound [117].

112   The University offers a broad range of staff development opportunities designed to support teaching, scholarship and curriculum development. A list of internal staff development events from 2018-2020 [115] includes sessions on observation training, writing for publication, module leadership and the University's approach to learning for new programmes. A list of staff external presentations from September 2016 to the present [116]

shows evidence of extensive research and scholarly activity being undertaken by staff, including conference presentations, research publications and media activity.

113   The Manual of Policies and Procedures [002] includes an Assessment Feedback Policy designed to ensure that University students benefit from staff expertise when it comes to providing timely, constructive and developmental feedback on assessment. The University has also issued guidance for staff on its expectations relating to the provision of assessment feedback to students which should follow the TACTICS framework (Timely, Amount, Clear, Tone, Informs Teaching, Constructive, Specific) [120]. Staff who have not completed the PGCLT are provided with the University's Guidance on Giving Feedback for Learning 2020 [120] which includes detailed information about the University's approach to feedback. The PGCLT Handbook also demonstrates that content surrounding the provision of assessment feedback is clearly embedded into the curriculum [055]. The student written submission 2018-19 [012] is positive about the University's feedback arrangements.

114   The University has appropriate staff recruitment and induction practices. As well as scrutinising staff qualifications at the point of interview, these are kept under review through the annual census [114]. Academic staff are required to deliver a 15-minute 'lecturette' as part of the interview process, providing an opportunity to test their subject knowledge and ability to engage an audience. On successful appointment, new staff receive faculty induction material [063] as part of their introduction to the University and in preparation for their first class. Details of induction include reference to the University's goal of building careers through education, underpinned by its values (everybody matters; trust and respect; stronger together; embrace change; and student, learner and client centric), learning outcomes, student communication and staff development, guidance and questions to consider to ensure that staff are ready to take their first class and guidance on facilitating student learning. During their probation period, new faculty members are assigned a mentor and the University has now introduced a requirement for new academic staff without a tertiary teaching qualification to enrol on the PGCLT as a means to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and expertise to support students. Freelance staff are subject to the same recruitment and induction process and are reported by the University to account for 20 per cent of PGCLT cohorts [000]. The University's promotions criteria and process [059] include explicit reference to expected levels of HEA Fellowship. They also include major and minor categories for promotion to Professor which align with elements of the degree awarding powers criteria, including external engagement and scholarship. The annual report on scholarship indicates that over a third of staff holders are on a grade higher than lecturer at present [027].

115   Programme approval documentation [055] and the University's workload model [119] demonstrate that there is a strategic and considered approach to resource allocation and the allocation of work. The model includes time for programme design and leadership tasks and student-staff ratios are an explicit feature of programme approval deliberations.

Conclusions

116   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

117   The team considers that the University has an appropriate number of staff to teach its students and that the assessment of staffing requirements is addressed as part of programme approval. Staff involved in teaching and supporting student learning are appropriately qualified and this is kept under review by the Academic Council through the Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report, which is informed by an annual faculty and scholarship census, and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Annual Report.

A range of support arrangements are in place for staff, including induction, observation and the performance and career development system, all of which the team considered to be operating effectively based on the evidence available. In addition, a wide range of staff development activity is in place and the University takes a strategic approach to encouraging staff engagement with research and scholarly activity and has monitoring arrangements in place which enables it to track outcomes. Detailed policies inform the approach of staff to teaching, learning and assessment feedback and students are satisfied with these areas of the University's provision. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Criterion D: Environment for supporting students

Criterion D1 - Enabling student development and achievement

118   This criterion states that:

D1.1   Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

119   The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence considered and why the team considered this evidence

120   The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance as follows.

a   To understand the extent to which the University's practices are informed by a strategic approach to enabling student development and achievement, the team reviewed the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2019-22 [016], Career Ready Strategy [017], Access and Participation Statement 2019-2022 [019], Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029], Student Assessment Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [030], Advice Quality Standards Monitoring Assessment Report 2019 [050], Library Strategy Progress Against Objectives [123], Student Experience Action Plan [124], Position Statement on BAME and Mature Students [128] and annual monitoring reports on student services [131].

b   To understand how the University monitors and evaluates the arrangements and resources it has put in place to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, the team considered the nature of the reports and data it uses to inform judgements on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the resources provided, including the Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029], Student Assessment Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [030], Attendance Agreement [060], position statements on the scrutiny of student data and the student data dashboard [070, 130], an example of an academic data set [129], and Annual Monitoring Reports on Student Services [131].

c   To establish how externals view the arrangements and resources in place to support student employability, the team considered external examiner comments included in the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], Programme Approval minutes [042], Matrix reports [051] and the BPS Accreditation Visit Report November 2017 [052].

d   To understand how the University, staff and agents provide advice and guidance for students that is tailored to their individual and collective needs, the team reviewed the University Student Handbook 2019-20 [005], Admissions Coaching Call Training Materials [048], a Position Statement on international agents and performance monitoring [126], and induction materials provided for students [127].

e   The team considered the student written submissions from 2018-19 and 2019-20 to establish students' views about the support provided by the University to enable them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential [012, 013].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

121   The team did not employ a sampling approach to this criterion as it had sufficient evidence on which to make a judgement.

What the evidence shows

122   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

123   The University's approach to enabling student development and achievement is guided by a commitment to equity and supported by relevant training for staff. The University's Access and Participation Statement [019] sets out its commitment to supporting Black and minority ethnic (BAME) and LGBT+ students from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as other low participation groups. In December 2016, the Equality and Diversity Forum set up a working group known as Project ERATIC (Equalities Retention and Achievement Through Inclusive Curriculum) in order to consider specific issues experienced by individuals with protected characteristics at the University. The project group had clear terms of reference, a timeline for activities and an explicit set of outputs and the University has since witnessed an increase in the number of students from low participation backgrounds. Following the conclusion of Project ERATIC, a BAME Attainment Group has been formed in addition to the University's Equality and Diversity Forum which, together with the SARA Committee, monitors equality and diversity data and student outcomes [128]. The Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [134] indicates that over 90 per cent of students agree that the University's faculty and staff support students' equality and diversity needs.

124   The University affirms its commitment to developing students' personal and professional potential through vocational programmes which develop 'career-ready graduates', supported by investment it has made in its teaching and learning infrastructure (including facilities, digital resources and support services) [000]. In order to achieve this, the University has put in place a series of underpinning strategies, including the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2019-22 [016] and the Career Ready Strategy [017] and monitors these through annual report such as the Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029] and the Student Assessment Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [030]. This comprehensive strategic approach is informed by detailed action plans relating to the library and the student experience [123, 124] which are subject to regular monitoring and review arrangements. Annual reports are produced for all central services [131], which, since 2019, have been in the form of the Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report [029] and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Annual Report [028]. These reports include satisfaction data with functions such as the library, careers and student advice services. The new format is focused around regulatory requirements and performance against internal benchmarks as well as incorporating explicit actions mapped to central service functions, demonstrating a structured and systematic approach to monitoring.

125   More specifically, the Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report [029] includes University benchmarks on the accessibility of classrooms and learning spaces, retention, progression, achievement and satisfaction with induction, among other objectives. The University has taken the decision to clearly map the report to the degree awarding powers criteria, helping to ensure that its monitoring data are aligned with evidence requirements. In a limited number of areas, for example in relation to enabling student

development and achievement, the commentary is narrative and does not appear to benefit from any measurable targets [029]. Overall, the University has clear monitoring and evaluative systems in place for its arrangements to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Progress is tracked, narrative reporting is detailed and performance against benchmark is measured in most places.

126   The Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [030] includes a detailed overview of key performance indicators, including regulatory requirements and internal survey outcomes. The report demonstrates that performance against teaching excellence framework (TEF) benchmarks are positive when it comes to continuation and progress to further employment or study. The University operates its own student experience survey and the report provides an overview of responses which are broadly positive. Programme induction, learning support, student advice and satisfaction with personal tutors score especially well among the student body. The institution highlights that assessment and feedback results in the National Student Survey are below benchmark and actions to address this, including the development of a feedback toolkit, are included in the Student Experience Action Plan 2019 [124]. All actions in this Plan have been completed or are ongoing and the team found that the University takes a strategic and considered approach to the use, monitoring and review of data.

127   The University's position statement on the scrutiny of student data [077] states that the purpose of the SARA Committee is to review achievement and retention data which also considers a broader data set encompassing student continuation and employability outcomes. Data considered by the SARA Committee and ARA Committee [129] and the minutes of meetings [125] reviewed by the team confirmed that there had been very detailed discussion of non-continuation rates of students on the University's undergraduate provision which had previously prompted the Department for Education to contact the University. The University has responded in various ways by implementing strategies, initiatives and projects to address the underperformance identified, including changes in the governance mechanisms and oversight maintained by University committees, defining 'at risk' criteria and the introduction of consistent exit interview practices [077]. As a result of these actions, the University reports a significant improvement in the continuation rates of full-time, first degree students. The SARA Committee has also discussed in detail the University's Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data and associated challenges, including the need to develop a more strategic approach to support arrangements for students from low-participation neighbourhoods. Recent discussion at the SARA Committee (December 2019) [125] indicates that there had been a 10.8 per cent reduction in non-continuation for first degree students and a 15.5 per cent reduction in non-continuation for other undergraduate students.

128   Further committee discussions on the February 2018 HESA audit considered issues in the 2016-17 record data. Actions have been taken to improve data systems and quality and further steps, such as improved attendance monitoring, have been progressed. This led the University to develop and implement an Attendance Agreement which the team found was clear and detailed, including explicit information for students admitted under the University's Tier 4 visa licence [060]. In November 2018 the University experienced a problem in producing non-progression statistics for the SARA Committee, owing to high workloads. However, the team's consideration of the position statement on the scrutiny of student data [077] and SARA minutes [125] indicates that data issues have been resolved. The University has a further project in place to develop a data dashboard and update the student record system. This includes a Project Overview Document, detailing objectives, success measures and a timeline. Key stages include the launch of an Active Student Dashboard and a Student Admissions Transparency Dashboard by April 2020, followed by a Student Engagement, Student Achievement and Student Satisfaction Dashboard by September 2020 [130].

129   The Career Ready Strategy [017] focuses on employability, developing relationships with alumni and viewing students as partners. The University's external Matrix Accreditation reports [051] detail positive findings relating to the careers support provided, including clear service goals and the wide range of activities for students, including the involvement of employers. In addition, the Matrix reports found that the Careers Service communicates effectively with students at all points during the student lifecycle and that it had even been a factor for some in their decision to study at the University [051]. Some limitations were identified such as feedback arrangements which were viewed at the time as being 'reviewed periodically' but not as a matter of course. However, the Year One Annual Continuous Improvement Check confirmed responsiveness to the development areas identified in the initial report, including through the introduction of a new system for student evaluation of careers appointments and events [051]. External examiners and PSRBs have also commented positively on the involvement of employers in programme design and development, which has contributed to an employability focus and a professional ethos in the University's provision [031, 042, 052].

130   The University's Library Strategy [123] is based on a 'digital first' principle and includes a series of objectives in line with this approach, including redesigning library spaces to make the best possible use of space, reducing the number of computers and increasing the number of student-useable study spaces with power sockets. The University is also developing a Technology Enhanced Learning Plan which will seek to more deeply embed the VLE into programme delivery in order to deliver on the strategic priority that 'learning, teaching and assessment is innovative and enhanced by technology'. In addition, students benefit from a number of specialist facilities and innovative services at the University, including mock court rooms, dental surgeries and the University's own pro bono centre. The latter was subject to an external Advice Quality Standard Accreditation which found that the service was being managed effectively [050].

131   Training and monitoring is in place for staff and international agents advising students about programmes, which includes a focus on whether admissions advice has been tailored to individual student needs [048, 126]. Details of induction materials demonstrate that, upon admission, students are provided with a thorough induction covering a wide range of information on University systems and processes as well as content on the teaching, learning and assessment and student support services [127]. The Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029] indicates that 86 per cent of respondents expressed satisfaction with the induction (against the University's internal target of 85 per cent). Supplementary information for students is available on the website and there is a Student Handbook containing detailed guidance for students on services including language support, careers and personal tutoring as well as specific information for international students [005]. The student written submissions report that students are largely positive about support arrangements, especially Careers and the Learning Support and Inclusion teams and the University's work around mental health [012, 013].

Conclusions

132   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

133   The team considers that the University has a comprehensive strategic approach to determine and evaluate how it enables the academic, personal and professional development and achievement of its diverse body of students. The University's strategic approach is supported by the use of detailed action plans, with clearly assigned responsibility and measurable targets. The University's oversight, timely production of detailed reports on the learning environment and student support and student assessment,

retention and achievement, and considered use of data allow it to effectively monitor student progression and performance. The University is committed to equity and has established an Equality and Diversity Committee (previously a forum) with responsibility for ensuring that the education and services provided by the University are inclusive and provide equality of opportunity for all students. The establishment of the Equality and Diversity Committee together with the SARA Committee, with its focus on data analysis to monitor and drive improved student outcomes for all, has led to closer monitoring and analysis of completion statistics and non-completion metrics to establish the extent to which it enables student development and achievement across the full range of its diverse student population. The SARA Annual Report 2018-19 indicates that over 90 per cent of staff support students' equality and diversity needs.

134   The University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment and Career Ready strategies and their associated action plans enable it to critically assess the extent to which the University is meeting its objectives. These are subject to annual monitoring and review which enable the University to assess the effectiveness of the regulations, systems, policies, and procedures the University has put in place. The University's engagement with external stakeholders, including employers, PSRBs, external academics involved in the academic governance of the University, in programme development, approval and review, and as external examiners, bears testimony to the strength of its commitment to provide students with an education on which to build their careers. Students clearly appreciate the University's strong employer links and their exposure to staff who bring academic and professional expertise to inform programme development and delivery. They also value the specialist support services the University provides and its commitment to the effective use of technology and learning resources to support student development. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Criterion E: Evaluation of performance

Criterion E1 - Evaluation of performance

135   This criterion states that:

E1:   An organisation granted degree awarding powers takes effective action to assess its own performance, respond to identified weaknesses and develop further its strengths.

136   The QAA assessment team conducted an assessment of this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment for Variation and Revocation of Degree Awarding Powers* (December 2019).

The evidence considered and why the team considered this evidence

137   The QAA team assessed this criterion by reference to a range of evidence gathered according to the process described in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular the suggested evidence outlined in Annex 5 and the University's submission. The team identified and considered this evidence for the purposes described in Annex 4 and 5 of this Guidance as follows.

a   To demonstrate how the University critically reviews its own progress, the team reviewed annual reports from across different areas of the University's provision, namely: the Annual Academic Quality Report 2018-19 [022], Annual Academic Quality Monitoring Evaluation Report 2018-19 [023], Office of Regulation and Compliance Annual Report 2018-19 [024], Academic Collaborations Annual Report 2018-19 [025], Annual Admissions Reports 2018-19 [026], Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report 2018-19 [027], Learning, Teaching and Assessment Annual Report 2018-19 [028], Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19 [029], Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19 [030], Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], Annual Programme Monitoring Review Summary Report 2017-18 [032] and the Annual Accredited Prior Learning Report 2017-18 [033].

b   To establish that the University has clear mechanisms for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny and monitoring of its academic provision, the team considered the MoPPs [002], Programme Annual Monitoring and Review Reports (APMRs) [083], Academic Council [038], Education and Standards Committee [041] and School Education and Standards Board minutes [132].

c   To demonstrate how ideas and expertise generated from within the University (both staff and students) and from external stakeholders are drawn into arrangements for programme design and development, the team considered the Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18 [031], an External Examiner Report [043], the BPS Accreditation Visit Report [052], programme approval documentation [055], full-time and freelance staff CVs [087], Programme Development Team notes/minutes and external reviews [133].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

138   The team considered a random sample of the following: APMRs (one from each of the four Schools) to confirm internal monitoring and review activities at programme level; eight staff CVs, including four permanent staff and four freelance staff from across the

University's Schools to demonstrate the experience that staff bring to programme delivery; and programme development team materials produced by the Law School relating to the development of the next generation of law programmes to demonstrate how ideas and expertise from within the University are drawn into the arrangements for programme design and delivery.

What the evidence shows

139   The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

140   The University undertakes thorough critical self-assessment which is integral to the operation of its higher education provision. This can be confirmed through its detailed critical assessment of the effectiveness of the arrangements and structures it has in place through such means as the Academic Council's consideration of annual reports relating to Academic Quality [022], Academic Quality Monitoring Evaluation [023], the Office of Regulation and Compliance [024], Academic Collaborations [025], Admissions [026], Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness [027], Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Learning Environment and Student Support [029], Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement [030], the External Examiner Summary Report, Programme Monitoring Review [032] and the Accredited Prior Learning [033]. These reports demonstrate critical analysis of specific criteria, comparison with internal benchmarks (University targets) and achievement against these targets. These reports also include recognition of areas of strength, concern and key risks. An Improvement and Enhancement Plan, constructed after comparison with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, is also part of these reports and progress against the previous year's Plan is addressed. As indicated earlier in this report, the University has addressed an issue relating to underperformance in relation to the continuation rates of undergraduate students and the University reports that actions taken have resulted in improved performance in relation to undergraduate student retention.

141   In order to capture any University-wide issues, the Academic Quality Office analyses all the external examiners' reports [031], including salient comments (on good/weak practice), a synthesis of recommendations and actions points, and their views on the administration of the process; standards and assessment; and curriculum and development. The Annual Programme Monitoring Review Summary Report [032] shows the critical assessment of all programme activities and stipulates actions to be taken, specifically by a programme or School, or University-wide, identifying the owner of the action and a time frame. All resulting action plans and follow-up from these reports and summaries are scrutinised by the Education and Standards Committee [041] where actions on issues are monitored and then reported to the Academic Council [038], demonstrating that the University exercises effective oversight of its provision and is committed to continuous improvement.

142   The University is action-oriented and has shown that its governance arrangements enable it to monitor and review its provision and identify action to be taken, should issues arise, as in the case of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Annual Report [028] and the Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Annual Report [030] which identified assessment feedback policy as an issue. Although feedback timeframes are clearly outlined in the academic regulations, policies and procedures [001, 002] with formative written feedback to be given within four weeks, students maintain in the most recent student written submission that this was not always achieved [013]. The University has now taken action to ensure that feedback from mock examinations is effective, timely, consistent, and provided within a timeframe in which students can absorb and make the most of the feedback given to them by their tutors.

143   The University's approach to critical self-assessment of individual programmes by programme teams is integral to the operation of its higher education. Its single set of regulations, policies and procedures [001, 002] specify that all programmes are monitored annually, taking into account external examiners' recommendations and actions and feedback from students, including module evaluations and programme evaluations at the conclusion of each year (multiple times on multi-year or part-time programmes), student experience surveys [079] and the National Student Survey. This process reviews overall student performance and performance by ethnicity, disability, learning difficulties, and any under-represented groups. Individual programme admissions, programme specifications, learning opportunities, good practice, areas for improvement and the monitoring of action from previous years are assessed annually. Programme APMRs reviewed by the team [083] confirmed that these are based on annual reviews, are prepared by programme leaders and are considered by programme management committees to decide on action plans. They are then subject to scrutiny by the relevant Dean of School, the Dean of Academic Quality and the relevant School Education and Standards Board [132]. Once approved by the School Education and Standards Board, APMRs are submitted to the University Education and Standards Committee [041], together with a composite summary to ensure consistency in the implementation of the University's academic framework to safeguard academic standards and the quality of the academic experience provided for students (B3 also refers).

144   The University is regularly externally reviewed, which is critical to the operation of its higher education to ensure quality, to compare itself against national benchmarks, to enhance its reputation and to enable students to gain professional accreditation. In addition to QAA reviews, the University has been subject to external review by multiple PSRBs [052, 055], by external examiners [031], and by accreditation bodies such as Matrix [051] and Ofsted [011]. The University has fully considered matters raised by these external reviews and action taken includes, for example, a revised teaching strategy to make better use of coaches when training apprentices recommended by Ofsted [011] and a review of the timing of e-formative assessments as recommended by the BPS [052]. Ongoing accreditation by the University's PSRBs demonstrates that external bodies have continued confidence in the University provision.

145   The University has clear mechanisms for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny and monitoring of its academic provision. These are clearly designated in the University's regulations, policies and procedures and articles of association [001, 002, 003]. From a governance perspective, the annual reports scrutinised by the Education and Standards Committee cover the breath of academic activities and are appropriate to the remit of the Committee [041]. A review of the Committee's minutes demonstrates that this body ensures actions have been assigned and discharged; and reports are ultimately reported to Academic Council which has legal responsibility to safeguard the standards of the University's awards [041, 003]. Annual reports presented to the Academic Council have clear owners and action plans ensure that owners are assigned to discharge each action. Education and Standards Committee and Academic Council minutes [041, 038] demonstrate that these mechanisms are followed methodically. The Annual Academic Quality Report [022] notes the cross-University forum provided by the Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Committee, and strategies and projects established to improve the University's performance in relation to non-continuation rates at undergraduate level and to enhance students' academic and professional achievement. These demonstrate the University's action-orientation and commitment to addressing areas of weakness identified [030, 125].

146   Staff CVs showed that staff are well qualified and have relevant expertise and experience. Staff can provide ideas and expertise in the initial stages of programme design and development during programme management committee meetings [084], programme development team meetings [087] and the School Review Board. These, together with ideas

external to the University, are demonstrated in programme approval documentation [034]. There is evidence to show that the University consults with the professions [094], external examiners [031] and PSRBs [052, 055]. External and internal expertise is also demonstrated during programme approval in the programme approval documentation. This documentation demonstrates ongoing and significant scope for externality at all levels of programme design, development and approval and through the external examining system. The use of external experts and ideas at all levels of the design, development and approval process helps to ensure programme relevance [041] and all the University's major programmes have PSRB accreditation. Internally, staff can provide ideas for the delivery of programmes and are supported in this by the extensive staff development programme and their own experience and expertise. Examples of this include the introduction in 2019 of an innovative online video platform [028], the introduction of adaptive learning into the Law School [046] and feedback on an assessment project [088]. This good practice is disseminated by the Feedback Toolkit on the VLE by each School's champion of learning. The annual scholarship report demonstrates that the majority of teaching staff who design, develop and deliver the programmes hold a relevant professional qualification and have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities which enables professional perspectives to inform the student experience [027].

147   The Annual External Examiner summary report [031] highlights key strengths as reported by external examiners, which include comment on the innovative, progressive programmes, the quality and practical relevance of the learning materials and the imaginative, practice-focused assessment instruments across all Schools.

Conclusions

148   The assessment team formulated its judgement against this criterion according to the process set out in *Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance on Assessment by QAA* (October 2019), in particular Annex 4.

149   The University's reporting processes provide it with the means to critically review its own performance, in particular in relation to standards and student outcomes, and to identify areas of strength, concern and key risks. It undertakes thorough monitoring of its programmes and comprehensively reviews the University's functions to ensure that these are operating as intended. It is aware of how it performs in comparison with other similar providers through its external examining process and external reviews and it has in place robust mechanisms for disseminating good practice. The University's governance arrangements and oversight by the Academic Council enable it to identify limitations or deficiencies in its own activities; take timely and effective remedial action when this is required; and to draw on internal and external ideas and expertise in programme design, approval, delivery and review. Successful accreditation of the University's provision by external bodies demonstrates that there is confidence in the University's provision. Staff are well qualified and bring relevant experience and expertise to bear in programme design, delivery and review. The team concludes, therefore, that the criterion is met.

Full degree awarding powers overarching criterion

150   The Full DAPs overarching criterion is that '*the provider is a self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems*'.

Conclusions

151   The team considered that there is a self-critical, cohesive academic community at the University and that the governance arrangements in place demonstrate a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems which are subject to effective oversight and monitoring and review arrangements.

152   The University's mission and associated strategies [015, 016, 017], regulations [001], policies and procedures [002] are detailed, clearly articulated and readily accessible. There is appropriate depth and strength in academic leadership that informs strategic direction and oversees implementation. The University's regulatory framework, which includes the General Academic Regulations (GARs) [001], the Manual of Policies and Procedures [002] and the University Student Handbook [005], alongside programme handbooks and a repository of forms and guidance, is comprehensive and approved by the Academic Council, the University's senior academic authority [001, 038]. The University has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications and its programme approval, monitoring, review and external examining systems demonstrate that it is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that meet threshold academic standards and that it can maintain such standards over time. Reviews by external bodies have been positive and external examiners confirm that academic standards are appropriate [031, 043, 052, 055].

153   The University has also demonstrated that it is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience to a diverse body of students, reflecting its commitment to equity and its intention to provide students with worthwhile learning opportunities and improved employability prospects [055]. The University has also established effective support mechanisms to help students to achieve their fullest academic, personal and professional potential.

154   Staff are well qualified academically and professionally and are able to draw on their experience to create real-life learning opportunities for students which will stand students in good stead when they graduate. The University has an appropriate blend of academic and professional expertise [027] which students value, given the opportunities this mix of staff provides to learn from real-life experience of staff engaged in professions students wish to join. The University's approach to scholarship reflects its commitment to professional practice and the application of knowledge to real-life situations and has been appreciated by external stakeholders and students [015].

155   The University has well-developed systems to monitor and evaluate the arrangements and resources it has in place to enable students to develop their potential [029]. It is critically self-aware and responds to areas of underperformance in an appropriate and timely manner, identifying actions required and individual responsibilities for action with timelines. Students are involved in academic governance of the University and appreciate the support provided by, and responsiveness of, the University to the views of students [012, 013].

156   The observations in the paragraphs above, together with the conclusions for each of the DAPs criteria A-E in this report, demonstrate that the University **meets** the

overarching criterion and has a self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards, supported by effective quality systems.

Annexes

List of evidence

Reference number	Evidence description
000	BPP University Self-Assessment Document.pdf
001	General Academic Regulations 2019-20.pdf
002	Manual of Policies and Procedures 2019-20.pdf
003	Articles of Association.pdf
004	Memorandum of Understanding .pdf
005	BPP University Student Handbook 2019-20.pdf
006	QAA ACDAP Assessors Report 2007 and Privy Council Letter.pdf
007	QAA Institutional Review 2012 and Privy Council Letter.pdf
008	QAA Annual Monitoring Review Report 2017.pdf
009	QAA Higher Education Review Report 2017.pdf
010	QAA Annual Monitoring Review Report 2018.pdf
011	Ofsted Report 2019.PDF
012	Student Written Submission 2018-19.pdf
013	Student-Written-Submission 2019-2020.pdf
014	Academic Development Plan 2019-2022.pdf
015	Scholarship Strategy 2019-2022.pdf
016	Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2019-2022.pdf
017	Career Ready Strategy 2019-2022.pdf
018	Student Protection Plan 2019-2022.pdf
019	Access and Participation Statement 2019-2022.pdf
020	Academic Structural Diagrams.pdf
021	Senior Leadership CVs.pdf
022	Annual Academic Quality Report 2018-19.pdf
023	Annual Academic Quality Monitoring Evaluation Report 2018-19.pdf
024	Office of Regulation and Compliance Annual Report 2018-19.pdf
025	Academic Collaborations Annual Report 2018-19.pdf
026	Annual Admissions Reports 2018-19.pdf
027	Annual Scholarship and Pedagogical Effectiveness Report 2018-19.pdf
028	Learning Teaching and Assessment Annual Report 2018-19.pdf
029	Learning Environment and Student Support Annual Report 2018-19.pdf
030	Student Assessment Retention and Achievement Annual Report 2018-19.pdf
031	Annual External Examiner Summary Report 2017-18.pdf
032	Annual Programme Monitoring Review Summary Report 2017-18.pdf
033	Annual Accredited Prior Learning Report 2017-18.pdf
034	Programme Approval Templates.pdf
035	Annual Programme Review Report Form.pdf
036	Annual External Examiner Report Form Template.pdf
037	Record of Study Examples.pdf
038	Academic Council Minutes.pdf
039	Academic Regulations and Awards Committee Minutes.pdf
040	Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel Minutes.pdf
041	Education and Standards Committee Minutes.pdf
042	Programme Approval Minutes.pdf
043	Annual External Examiner Report Example
044	External Reviews - Programme Approval.pdf

045	External Governance Reviews.pdf
046	New Law School Programmes Training Slides.pdf
047	Academic Governance Structural Changes.pdf
048	Admissions Coaching Call Training Materials.pdf
049	QAA Good Practice Case Study - Support for Students with Mental Health Difficulties a truly institutional approach.pdf
050	Advice Quality Standards Monitoring Assessment Report 2019.pdf
051	Matrix Reports.pdf
052	BPS Accreditation Visit Report.pdf
053	Learning Outcomes Training Slides.pdf
054	GDL Marking Analysis Exercise.pdf
055	Programme Approval Documentation.pdf
056	Mitigating Circumstances Panel Minutes October 2019.pdf
057	External Examiner Handbook 2019-20.pdf
058	Performance and Career Development Record Template.pdf
059	Academic Grades Criteria.pdf
060	Attendance Agreement.pdf
061	Standard Marking Criteria.pdf
062	Guidance for Invigilators.pdf
063	Faculty Induction Materials.pdf
064	Postgraduate Destinations Report 2018.pdf
065	BPP University Students Association Statement.pdf
066	Evidence List.docx
067	Evidence Mapping Document.docx
068	Position Statement Remit of BoD.pdf
069	BoD Terms of Reference including standing agenda for AC and BoD.pdf
070	Report and Papers between Board of Directors and Academic Council.pdf
071	Board of Director Minutes 2018-2019.pdf
072	Academic Risk Framework.xlsm
073	Job Description Head of Academic Audit.pdf
074	Academic Risk Assessment and Due Diligence Report.pdf
075	Collaborative Agreement Roots Ivy International Schools (Private) Limited.pdf
076	Academic Collaborations Report Transnational Provision February 2020.pdf
077	Position Statement Scrutiny of Student Data.pdf
078	Student Staff Liaison Committee Form (LLM Law Conversion) Nov 2019.pdf
079	Copy of Survey Questionnaires.pdf
080	Programme Proposal Forms - Two Examples.pdf
081	Programme Approval Record Certificate - Three Examples.pdf
082	Programme Approval Guidance Materials.pdf
083	APMRs - Four Examples.pdf
084	Programme Management Committee Minutes (one from each School).pdf
085	Sample of assessed work including brief marked script and markers guide.pdf
086	Annual External Examiners Report Form.pdf
087	Staff Curriculum Vitaes.pdf
088	Dissemination of good practice.pdf
089	External Examiner Nomination Form.pdf
090	Assessment Marking Training.pdf

091	Schedule of Work for External Examiners 2019-20.pdf
092	Response to Annual EE Summary Report Action.pdf
093	Screenshots of guidance to appeals and complaints on VLE.pdf
094	BPP University Law School - Law training survey report.pdf
095	Law School Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy.pdf
096	Position Statement Distance Learning.pdf
097	Distance Learning Admissions.pdf
098	Distance Learning Induction.pdf
099	Distance Learning and Teaching.pdf
100	Distance Learning Resources and VLE.pdf
101	Distance Learning Assessment.pdf
102	Distance Learning Student feedback.pdf
103	Distance Learning Programme Monitoring.pdf
104	Examples of staff development for online teaching.pdf
105	Personal Tutor Handbook 2019-2020.pdf
106	Team Marking Guide Example.pdf
107	Formative Assessment Examples.pdf
108	Eight examples of Formal Complaint Outcomes.pdf
109	Two Academic Appeal Outcomes.pdf
110	Confirmed Minutes Mitigating Circumstances Board 22 July 2019.pdf
111	Reasonable Adjustments Case.pdf
112	Academic Misconduct Case.pdf
113	APL Example.pdf
114	Annual Faculty and Scholarship Census 18-19 - Questions.pdf
115	List of Internal Staff Development Events.pdf
116	List of Staff External Publications September 2016 to Present.pdf
117	Observation Review Reports per School.pdf
118	Performance and Career Development.pdf
119	Law School Workload Planning.pdf
120	TACTICS Staff Training.pdf
121	Position Statement Lead Responsibility Groups.pdf
122	Careers Hub Monitoring.pdf
123	Library Strategy Progress Against Objectives.pdf
124	Student Experience Action Plan.pdf
125	SARA Minutes.pdf
126	Position Statement International Agents and Performance Monitoring.pdf
127	Induction Materials.pdf
128	Position Statement BAME and Mature.pdf
129	Academic Data Set Example.pdf
130	Position Statement Data Dashboard Update.pdf
131	Annual Monitoring Reports on Student Services.pdf
132	School Education and Standards Board Minutes 18-19 and 19-20.pdf
133	Programme Development Team Minutes and supporting evidence.pdf
134	BPPU responses to request for additional information as sent to provider 240220.docx
135	Position Statement Academic Risk Ownership
136	Student and Staff Numbers (as at March 2020)

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms

BPP University Committees, Boards, Panels and Departments	
AC	Academic Council
ARA	Academic Regulations and Awards Committee
BoD	Board of Directors
ESC	Education and Standards Committee
ORC	Office of Regulation and Compliance
PASP	Programme Approval Scrutiny Panel
PDT	Programme Development Team
SARA	Student Assessment, Retention and Achievement Committee
SSLC	Staff Student Liaison Committee
SRB	School Review Board
UAP	University Approval Panel
Educational Delivery Methods and Processes	
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
CPD	Continuing professional development
VLE	Virtual learning environment
Regulatory and Reporting Instruments	
APMR	Annual Programme Monitoring Report
GARs	General Academic Regulations
MoPPs	Manual of Policies and Procedures
PPF	Programme Proposal Form
BPP University Programmes	
AdvDip	Advanced Diploma
BSc	Bachelor of Science
BPTC	Bar Professional Training Course (for Barristers)
BVC	Bar Vocational Course (for Barristers)
GDL	Graduate Diploma in Law
QLD	Qualifying Law Degree
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
LLM	Master of Laws
LPC	Legal Practice Course (for Solicitors)
MA	Master of Arts
MChiro	Master of Chiropractic
MClinDent	Master of Clinical Dentistry
MSc	Master of Science
PGCLT	Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching
PLP	Professional Legal Practice
External Professional and Statutory Bodies, and Learned Associations	
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ACDAP	Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers
BSB	Bar Standards Board
BPS	British Psychological Society
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Professional Development
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
DfE	Department for Education
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
GCC	General Chiropractic Council
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England

HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
OIA (HE)	Office of the Independent Adjudicator (for Higher Education)
OfS	Office for Students
PSRBs	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
SRA	Solicitors Regulation Authority
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
UKVI	UK Visas and Immigration
Other	
COMD	College of Medicine and Dentistry
FHEQ	The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies
TACTICS	Timely, Amount, Clear, Tone, Informs Teaching, Constructive, Specific